**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**THURSDAY, 18 JUNE 2020
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***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY***

The House met at 14:02.

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, the only item on today’s order paper is questions addressed to the President. There are four supplementary questions on each question. Parties have given an indication of which questions their members wish to pose to supplementary question. Adequate notice was given to parties for this purpose. This was done to facilitate participation of members who are connecting to the sitting through the virtual platform.

The members who will pose supplementary questions will be recognised by the Presiding Officer.

In allocating opportunities for supplementary questions, the principle of fairness amongst others has been applied. If a member who is supposed to ask a supplementary question through the

virtual platform is unable to do so due to technological difficulties, the party whip on duty will be allowed to ask the question on behalf of their member in the House. When all of the questions have been answered by the President, we will proceed to the next question on the paper. The first question has been asked by hon Makhubele-Mashele. I have been informed that the President will be answering questions through the virtual platform.

Question 1:

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Deputy Speaker, hon members, I welcome this opportunity albeit a virtual way of answering questions. The global coronavirus pandemic is both a national crisis and an economic crisis.

As we have acted to protect the health and the lives of all our people, we have also had to limit the severe economic impact. Our economic response can be divided into three phases. The first phase began in mid-March when we declared the coronavirus pandemic as a national disaster. What we did included a brought range of measures to mitigate the worse effects of the pandemic on business, on communities and individuals. The measures included tax relief, the release of disaster relief funds, emergency procurement processes, wage support through the unemployment insurance fund, UIF, and funding to small businesses.

Towards the end of April, we realised that this pandemic was having a much deeper effect negatively. It then led us to embark on the second phase of our economic response. It was both economic as well as social. And this included a five hundred billion support package to stabilise the economy and to protect jobs. But it was also meant to support our people who through their various economic activities were no longer earning an income. This had to do with people in informal businesses. But it also included people who were getting social grants, but the social grants had become insufficient. It also included unemployed people in our country.

To that end, the measures that we implemented came up with temporary payments to social grants beneficiaries, a special Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress grant of R350 a month for six months to the unemployed and a loan guarantee scheme of two hundred billion, to support small and medium enterprise businesses; whose turnover is determined as well.

It worth noting that the 500 billion support package is worth around 10 to 11% of gross domestic product, GDP, which is larger than equivalent support measures announced by other emerging markets and those countries that are in the G20.

The third phase is a comprehensive economic strategy that will be aimed at driving the recovery of our economy as we emerged from the pandemic. Given the massive impact that the corona virus is expected to have on jobs; our immediate task is to create employment. I have often said that we need to look at the post covid-19 economic landscape as being equivalent to a post-war economic landscape. So, we have to do the extraordinary. And we will do this by embarking on a number of initiatives that will be aimed at creating jobs; and some of those will be expanding public employment, increasing investment in public infrastructure and services and enabling greater job creation by the private sector.

Progress is being made within government to increase investment in everything with several major projects that are ready for implementation. Next week, the presidency will be convening the sustainable infrastructure development symposium, which will bring together funders, policy makers, state-owned enterprises, academic and private sector people; to look at the investment opportunities in infrastructure.

We should be seeing infrastructure investment as an immobiliser of growth. We want to source money; significant investment from a number of sources both private and public. We see this as a significant part of the stimulus that our economy needs.

Deputy Speaker, this pandemic has highlighted the vital importance of the informal sector as well. And of small businesses in meeting the basic needs of our people. This informal sector which others describe as the second economy; in many ways, has come to the fore in supporting the lives and livelihoods of our people during lockdown. We now have a much better view of the landscape of the small medium enterprise sector and the more informal part of it.

Our programme of economic recovery needs to provide greater support to these enterprises which provide income and employment for many young people. At the same time, we will implement key reforms that supports long-term growth; these include measures to support building of energy capacity reforms to improve port capacity as well as the efficiency of our ports and the licensing of high demand spectrum.

We have also been focused on measures required to protect African economies and ensure they effectively recover from the effects of the pandemic. In my capacity as the Chairperson of the African Union, AU, I have held several engagements with the leaders and institutions in international community, to call for a comprehensive economic package to provide economic relief to African economies. This package would need to include debt cancellation, debt [Inaudible.] as well as interest waivers, which

will provide poorer countries the much needed fiscal space to deal with the economic ramifications of the virus.

As I have announced, we have also appointed six AU envoys to solicit financial support for the continent from a number of financial centres, G20 countries, international organisations and many others. They have also made significant progress in mobilising material support for African countries to respond to the pandemic. And to date, a total of 61 million dollars has been pledged, for both the AU COVID-19 Response and the African Union’s Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

It would take long to recover the economic loss due to this virus. Although, we do not know yet what the full impact of the pandemic is, we are starting that recovery now. It is important that we approach this through the balanced strategy that we had decided on. To save lives on the one side and also preserve livelihoods.

It becomes a very delicate balance, but it is a balance that has to be struck. Because in the end, we cannot overemphasise the other at the expense of the other. I thank you. [Applause.]

Ms L S MAKHUBELA-MASHELE: Deputy Speaker, President, the aftermath of any economic downturn or devastation is usually characterised by extensive market regulations and industrial planning which are

state-led. What are the policy options being considered by government that would allow and give space to the hard-hit sectors to recovery specifically, the protection of manufactured products? I thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The PRESIDENT OF RSA: Deputy Speaker, indeed any devastation post situation - if we now talk about post covid as being almost similar to post-war - does in the end leads to a reset of many things, reset of processes, reset of policies and reset of protocols. We now need to reset nearly everything because post covid is going to change everything. I think many people around the world accept that including the central banks that are often quite conservative; they now believe that we have got to look at the rules again, even us as policy makers we have got to look at the policies that we have embarked upon in the past and see whether they are still fit for purpose and for the current situation that is going to confront us post covid-19.

I happen to believe that yes, we do need to reset our economy. We do need to reset the structure of our economy. We do need to look at the way we have always done things. This is the moment that should herald a new change; in a way much as covid-19 is a dark cloud that is hanging over the lives and the economy of our country, it does have a silver lining. And the silver lining is

that it gives us an opportunity to look at the way we have been doing things; our policies and our processes, our institutions and see whether they are still fit for purpose to deal with the devastation that covid-19 is going to bring about.

Therefore yes, the state has to play a critical role, even your more conservative countries in the world are saying the state now needs to play its role. Any post-war situation must be state-led. That is where the state needs to set policies, give direction and the state therefore is called upon as it has been called upon to give leadership in the past 80days; similarly, it will still be required to give leadership to look at how the market is functioning and structured. It will need to look at various policy options. Are the policy options that we had pre covid-19 still relevant beyond that? That is precisely what we are now looking at in government. Are the timeframes that we had in mind still the same? As it is now, even our budget, our budgeting processes also need to be looked at. The Minister of Finance will come to the House to present an emergency budget. It is a reset of the budget that was presented. Going forward, we are already looking at starting from point zero; zero-based budgeting process is now going to be heralded, it is going to be the new order of the day. We are now going to have a new normal as we proceed forward.

Of course, in doing so, we want to be able to advance a number of options and initiatives. The first one is that many people are going to lose their jobs. We now need to embark on a very vigorous process of creating jobs. We also need to protect the jobs that maybe at risk at the moment. And we have already in the

R500 billion that we announced, part of that is going to be protecting jobs. Therefore, we are going to be acting in a way, unconventionally, we are going to be acting in a way that will protect the livelihoods of a number of our people. Protecting jobs and creating jobs.

We will also be looking at new sectors of the economy, the restructuring process of our economy that needs to get underway. We need to ask ourselves which are the new sectors that we need to look at. The capacity of the state also need to be strengthened.

We need to hasten the strengthening of the capacity of the state. We now need to look to the various sub-sectors of our economy, but we also need to look at great opportunity that lies ahead ... [Interjections.]

Mr V PAMBO: I rise on a point of order. Deputy Speaker!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr President, just a moment. What is your point of order?

Mr V PAMBO: Just yesterday there was an agreed position that every speaker must have the approved background of Parliament. The President seems not to be following in that agreement. I think that it is in order that the President leads by example and puts the background that resemble Parliament. Each and every member has been sent the full background. So there is no excuse for the President of the country to be using the background that is obviously political and does not really speak to Parliament. Even though he is at home he must at least resemble Parliament as all of us have done. So please, may the President follow the rules as all of us are doing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The President is following the rules. He is not a Member of Parliament. That rule doesn’t apply to him. Hon President, please proceed.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Point of order!

Mr J S MALEMA: I rise on a point of order. You are out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the point is not about the same matter.

Yes, let’s hear. What are you rising on?

Mr J S MALEMA: Your ruling is out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ok ...

Mr J S MALEMA: When the President is in Parliament the rules of Parliament applies to him. Don’t come with that kitchen approach of favouring other people and not favouring other people. You know very well that even if he is not a Member of Parliament, the rules of Parliament apply to him when he is in Parliament. As you are encouraging all of us to do; ask him to put a Parliament background.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: ... Hon Malema, listen to me. You have made your point and I have ruled on this matter. If you contest the ruling, please do what the rules say you must do. You can’t contest it during the session. You must write to the Speaker and lay your complaint there, please. We are proceeding. Mr President, please proceed.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: I rise on a point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope it’s not on the same point, if it is, you are out order in advance. I am not taking any view on this matter. And I am advised by the rules to do that.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: It is you who said yesterday that people must not use any other background and you know very well that the rules ... [Interjections.]

AN HON MEMBER: You are also not using the Parliament background, Shivambu.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, please! The President will proceed.

Mr J S MALEMA: You allowed the President to come ... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are not supposed to be talking hon Malema. You breaking the rules, nobody recognised you.

Mr J S MALEMA: ... the President must display a fireplace in Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Malema, you breaking the rules of the House. Stop talking please! Hon members, we have ruled on these matters, members are not supposed to contest rulings of the House

... [Interjections.]

Mr J S MALEMA: We are going to put imbawula [the fireplace] and there is nothing you can do.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, ok. You think there is nothing I can do. You watch the space hon Malema! And you have a responsibility to act ... [Interjections.]

Mr V PAMBO: How do you preside with threats?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, it’s not a threat is a requirement of the rules.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: You must taste your own medicine. Tell Ramaphosa to put a Parliament background.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Switch off the mics, please!

AN HON MEMBER: Whose mics are being switched off now?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, I am not taking any points of order anymore.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order I am going to accept now because the matters you are raising are about matters

that I have ruled upon. And you can’t be contesting those in the House. Even under the assumption that I am wrong, take it to the Speaker in writing as the rules advise you. You can’t stop the proceedings of the House on the basis that your way is all our way. It can’t be.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: You must be consistent.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon President, please proceed.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: ... one of the opportunities that this moment heralds is that we are going to focus on areas that we have often spoken about, but have not really followed through; like for instance, strengthening our industrial base in the reindustrialisation process, making sure that there is localisation that we manufacture goods in our country and ensure that the manufacturing base is once more strengthened.

We have seen how - for instance, as we have been scouring around the world trying to get masks and personnel protection equipment, PPEs, that this can give us a great opportunity to have our own masks made here and our own PPEs made here. But this is an opportunity that many who are in the manufacturing base are beginning take up. So this post-covid moment, we should utilise to

make more South African goods; make sure we localise and make sure we strengthen our industrial base. Through all this, we will then be able to focus on a number of areas that are going to support the livelihoods of our people, provide better services.

Opportunities post-covid are quite plentiful and so therefore that is why I say, there is in the end a silver lining below this cloud.

Our third phase which is going to deal with the economic recovery going forward must make sure that we build an inclusive economy; an economy that is going to create jobs an economy that is going to ensure that young people are brought in, they use their capability and their knowledge and we push the agenda of the Fourth Industrial Revolution that women in our country get great opportunities and are supported. And we bring in the private sector to invest more and more in the economy, as we strengthen our state-owned enterprises as well. Going forward, we see great opportunities and we believe that this is a moment that we need to move our economy forward.

We would go through a slump because covid-19 still has to have its effect and we need to see how that effect is going to work out.

But we are going to go on with the rebuilding process as we move forward. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

Question 1 (cont):

Mr M HLENGWA: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Mr President, obviously the situation before us is very dire if you consider the fact that some research projects that Africa will lose about 20 million jobs because of this virus. However, Mr President, on the flip side of it you speak about billions and billions of rand which will be injected into the many programmes to reset and restart the economy ... [Inaudible.] ... be ignorant to the fact that chief amongst the biggest threats to the money that will be made available is corruption. You look at the Beitbridge border post for example ... R37 million for

40 kilometers; you look at how the social development grants and food parcels have been abused.

Now, Mr President, the question is what conversations and decisions are you taking at an executive level, whilst Parliament will of course have its own processes, to actually deal with this scourge of corruption which of course is taking advantage of the crisis that we are in, particularly given the ... [Inaudible.] [Time expired.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Hlengwa. You have overrun your time. Sorry, your time has expired. Hon Hlengwa, in future please try to time yourself better. State your questions upfront so that

when I cut you, as I will when you go overtime, you will have asked your question.

Mr M HLENGWA: Noted, Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, of course corruption is and remains a major challenge to our country. We need to deal with corruption effectively. Even as we announced this R500 billion economic relief and social relief, I took time to speak to the Auditor-General, AG. I told the AG that we need to put proactive mechanisms in place so that we do not come after the effect. We need to put mechanisms in place that are going to raise the alarm at an early stage. The AG had already taken it upon himself to get his office to come up with a number of protocols and a number of ... [Inaudible.] ... which I think he is working through, because we do need to ensure that those who have corrupt intentions are stopped in their tracks before they loot money that is meant for the poor people in our country.

Of course, we have also been disturbed by news and reports that things such as food parcels have been redirected in ways that did not look as good as what we had intended. As they have happened, we are glad that the media raised the alarm; we are glad that various structures, including political parties here in

Parliament, have raised the alarm, and I am sure that that has now quietened down quite a bit.

However, hon Hlengwa, like you we are concerned and we want to ensure that the money that has been set aside for COVID relief at a social level and at an economic level is properly used, and it is used for what it is intended. Obviously, quite a bit of that money is going to be utilised for social grants which the Department of Social Development is dealing with. I was pleased when I heard their report about the distribution of the R350,00 to a number of people who were not on their system. That is proceeding. More than R1 million has already been distributed and this week alone they are going to distribute a further R1 million. That process that they have set in place is such that the money should end up going to those people that it was intended for. The money that should go as additional grants to beneficiaries of our grant system will end up going there. Money that will be set aside to assist small and medium enterprises will end up going there.

In the main, the bulk of the money is going to be channelled through the various platforms that we have. What we need to be alert to is the other money that will be distributed in ways where we need to ensure that it does end up going to those beneficiaries. We are going to ensure that the R500 billion is

distributed in a way where we minimise corruption as much as possible. We will keep a hawk’s eye on how all that is going to happen and we are glad to know that an institution like the AG will also be joining in the act on a proactive basis rather than on a reactive basis. We will try the best we can and obviously with the assistance of the various structures in Parliament we hope that we will minimise corruption as much as possible. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Mr President, everyone, including your Finance Minister, agrees that the only sustainable option for the way forward in our economy if we are going to unlock economic growth is through structural reform. In fact, Mr President, structural reform was the basis on which you campaigned for the Presidency of your party and for the country, and yet we stand here in Parliament today, three years later, and you’ve got nothing to show for it.

Yesterday we heard that we are going to have to spend R33 billion to bail out the SA Airways, SAA, to save a thousand jobs. Mr President, the question to you is this. Will you today take a brave stand and stand with the three million South Africans who are going to lose their jobs, and oppose the R33 billion bailout? Or are you going to see that money being poured into the abyss of

a state-owned entity, SOE, like the SAA, while it could’ve been used to save the lives and livelihoods of millions of more South Africans? [Applause.]

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. We are going to do everything we can to ensure that we reposition our economy and our country on a reform process which is going to ensure that our economy functions a lot better. One of the things that we have said is that we are also going to pay closer attention to our SOEs and ensure that our SOEs function efficiently in a way that they should. Those SOEs that need attention should be given the attention, from either a financial point of view — we should see how best those finances can be repositioned — or an operational point of view. We have set up the State-Owned Enterprises Council, which is going to be advising government and Cabinet, on which Cabinet Ministers will also be sitting. We are going to have a closer look at all our SOEs and we will do so to advance the interests of all South Africans.

The SOEs will continue to play an important role in our economy. This is also the case now, post-COVID, in other economies as well. The other day I saw that the German government had taken an equity position in Lufthansa because their airline has, during the COVID period, hit a number of financial difficulties, and the state has

moved in to support that airline. Indeed, this is what is happening in many countries around the world where enterprises, be they state-owned or privately-owned, are now needing support to be able to move forward.

Now, you talk about the SAA. The business rescue practitioners are coming forward with a plan which we are going to discuss. We are going to discuss precisely what they are proposing. I appointed an interministerial committee which has been dealing with what the business rescue practitioners have put forward and we are going to interrogate precisely what they are proposing. If you care to know, the state is already exposed to the SAA saga, if you like, because the state over time — and this did not happen last year or the year before last — acts as the guarantor of the financial fortunes of many of our SOEs. So, the state is already exposed to the tune of R16 billion. The business rescue practitioners are coming forward with the plan which we will look at very closely and we will look at the pros and the cons of precisely what they are proposing, as well as the time frame. We will also look at whether the SAA can be restructured in any way, shape or form, and whether in doing so we can look more broadly at our aviation industry.

The post-COVID-19 situation gives us a number of opportunities that we now need to look at. I would like to invite you as well to look at the post-COVID-19 situation through different lenses — a different lens that will say, what do we do to restructure the economy of our country? What do we also do to reposition SOEs? If you have any ideas, please bring them to the table because it is at this time that we are looking at various propositions as we move forward. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr President. We now move to Question 2 asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, my apologies. Hon Shivambu, it is your turn. Go ahead.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: It was not a mistake; it was deliberate. The question we are responding to, President ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, hon Shivambu, if it is deliberate then you don’t proceed. You don’t talk. [Laughter.] That’s the Rule. You will not talk. You are not the President of the country, man ...

[Laughter] ... with a government logo ... [Interjections.] No, you

won’t speak! No, you won’t speak!

Mr J S MALEMA: [Inaudible.] You must stop behaving like you are drunk!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you wont speak!

Mr J S MALEMA: You must stop behaving like you are drunk! You are

... [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, hon Shivambu, these Rules ...

Mr J S MALEMA: [Inaudible.]

An HON MEMBER: Hey Julius, you are drunk yourself!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: These Rules ... We are noting what you are saying and we are going to check these remarks that you are making. You are not going to speak if you do not change that thing, deliberately. [Interjections.]

Ms N V MENTE: You are emotional, man. Can you just calm down? [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are telling the House that you are deliberately breaking the Rule and there is no way that you will be allowed to speak. No way! No, you have to throw me out of the House!

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Can I ... [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no, hon members, we made a ruling on this matter yesterday. [Interjections.] It will not be changed by the methods you are using. No!

An HON MEMBER: You are out of order, chief!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I am not out of order.

An HON MEMBER: Who is out of order? You are out of order! [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am enforcing the Rules that you were part of making.

Ms N V MENTE: He is out of order! Lechesa is out of order! He always does it!

An HON MEMBER: Who is Lechesa, wena?

An HON MEMBER: He thinks he’s a clown.

An HON MEMBER: You are the clown! [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must ... No, we are listening to you. This is a recorded session of Parliament and we will act against it. We will not allow anybody to speak here. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Stop being disrespectful!

An HON MEMBER: Yissus! [Oh Lord!]

An HON MEMBER: Yissus, you! [Interjections.]

Ms N V MENTE: [Inaudible.] We are not here on your favour; we were voted to be here. [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, it is wrong for you to do what you are doing and you are not going to be allowed to do it. [Interjections.]

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Can I proceed with the question?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, on condition that you know what you must do. You know there are conditions, sir.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: What should I do? What should I do because you are in the Chair and you must tell me what I should do, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You switched off ... You put it on. You had it on. You put it on ... the background. You do it!

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: But Deputy Speaker ...

An HON MEMBER: What background?

An HON MEMBER: All your people were speaking with different backgrounds and they were never ordered to do so. Why are you ... [Inaudible.] [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Who is this person who screams like she is in a tavern? [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You, keep quiet! Let me make a ruling. You keep quiet, hon members! [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Stop your nonsense!

An HON MEMBER: Go and sleep! [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Shivambu, proceed. We will come back to that.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Thank you very much. The question that you are responding to is in two parts. The first part is in relation to the South African economy and the second one is in relation to the free trade agreement – the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement. Predictably, in your response you said you are going to call another symposium. That’s what you did when you had a coup d'état against Jacob Zuma in 2018. [Inaudible.] ... symposiums got lots of commitments on growth and investments. Your friends, the white capitalist establishment, committed to grow the South African economy but since you have been in office South Africa’s economy has grown by less than 0,2%, which is the worst since the global economic crisis, and there seems to be nothing. Now you are saying that post-COVID-19 you are going to start localising and that is a commitment you made when first you lockdowned South Africa. Why not now?

The last question that we want to deal with is, noting the fact that the economy of the entire African continent is owned and controlled by colonial descendants — the descendants of the colonial settlers — isn’t this free trade agreement going to be a free trade of colonialists and now the Chinese, without any African ownership of the economy? [Inaudible.] [Time expired.]

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: ... [Inaudible.] ... saying that we need to localise, but the post-COVID situation is going to add impetus to precisely that. Firstly, we have been able to see how we can get our own industrialists to live up to coming into the economy, and becoming real industrialists and manufacturers. Hon Shivambu, I have seen for myself how a number of black industrialists are taking various opportunities that COVID-19 is presenting to them. They are making some of the goods that are now needed. Right here in our own country they are making the masks, they are making the personal protective equipment, PPEs, and they are now going to be moving forward to even making the test kits.

Many of them are black industrialists. We need to welcome this. Over time they will start at the economies of scale, so as also to be able to export.

Later today we are going to be launching a platform for the African continent where we are going to be able to get all

countries on the African continent to buy diagnostic and therapeutic medical supplies. Admittedly, quite a number of them come from other countries, but interestingly, a number of those supplies are going to be supplied by African manufacturers from Egypt right down to the south. They are going to be part of this platform. They are going to be selling various supplies to the entire continent. This is what COVID-19 is presenting to the continent as a silver lining.

A number of 100% owned African entities on the African continent are coming to the fore. They are going to be part of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement and they are now also going to participate on this platform for medical supplies that we are going to set up. We are seeing the positive side. What we are also saying is that we need to be encouraging and supporting, and the state needs to be assisting, and giving incentives and support, both financial and otherwise, to as many of our own country’s black industrialists as possible to help grow the economy of our country. Yes, the economic growth of our country has been tempering down for some time. We have been doing everything we can to reposition our economy so that we can begin to accede to higher levels of growth. Post-COVID-19 is going to give us an even greater opportunity to be able to do so.

I am optimistic; I am not pessimistic like some people are. I am very optimistic and I think that we do have an opportunity. These are opportunities that we must yield. If there was ever a time for us to be able to bring in more and more black people into the industrial base and the manufacturing base, this is the time that we need to utilise. That is why we are saying that the restructuring of our economy is a moment that we need to grasp.

Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Hon Shivambu said that the President led a coup d'état against former President Jacob Zuma. That is incorrect. There was no coup d'état, and I request that, in terms of our Rules, he should withdraw the statement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, we will look at it and we will come back on that matter. We will make a ruling.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: And I am not going to withdraw.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon Leader of the Opposition asked the next question, which is Question 2, Mr President.

Question 2

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Honourable Deputy Speaker and hon members, in determining the appropriate response to the global coronavirus pandemic, government has been informed by the advice of scientists, by the experiences of other countries and from the guidance of the World Health Organization as well as the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.

The decision to institute a nationwide lockdown was informed, among other things, by epidemiological analyses based on the available evidence of the rate at which the number of coronavirus cases was increasing.

This provided modelled estimates of over 1 million infections at peak. Recently, the country’s COVID-19 Modelling Consortium has generated optimistic as well as pessimistic estimates of between 3,4 to 3,7 million cases of infections by 01 November this year. The initial estimates pointed to the need to act quickly and decisively before the epidemic curve reached what scientists call, the inflection point. The inflection point is when the curve changes from a slow and a steady increase in cases to one with an exponential growth almost an explosive growth. South Africa had an opportunity to act early before its inflection point had been reached.

We made the decision to implement a lockdown when there were 274 confirmed cases in the country. At that point, scientists estimated that South Africa already had over 1 000 cases, many of which had not been identified yet, due to limited screening and stringent testing criteria. By the time I announced the lockdown on Monday 23 March, the number of confirmed cases had risen to 402, and by the time the lockdown took effect if we all recall on Friday 27 March, there were already 1 170 cases. In other words, we had seen an explosion.

A prolonged delay in implementing stringent measures would have meant that South Africa would have missed the window of opportunity to achieve a significant flattening of the curve. This could have led to a runaway epidemic with potentially catastrophic consequences for our healthcare services. In this case it is important that, the graph that Professor Carrim and Minister Mkhize has shown repeatedly should remain affixed in our minds, where we were proceeding on the same trajectory as the United Kingdom, UK. When we did the lockdown, it immediately saw us deviating from the path that the UK was moving forward on. The UK kept on moving up while our cases of infection started moving more flatter. They kept moving up, with their own infections going higher and higher and many deaths accompanying that.

In the three weeks before the nationwide lockdown, the number of coronavirus cases was doubling every two days. During the course of the level 5 lockdown, cases were on average doubling only every

15 days, meaning that the lockdown was taking the effect that we intended. Since we began the easing of the lockdown, during alert levels four and three, the doubling time has now been around 12 days. In other words, the lockdown enabled the country to start to flatten the curve, delaying community transmission, something we were most concerned about when we were not ready, for long enough to prepare our health facilities and implement public health responses.

If you remember that graph of the UK and ourselves, when they implemented what appeared to be a lockdown, they were already at the height of a number of deaths and many more infections. In our case, we had succeeded through the lockdown to flatten and the doubling effect had come back down from two days to 15 days, and now it has come down to 12 days. I thank you. [Applause]

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Mr President, at the beginning of the pandemic, you asked South Africans to make sacrifices and South Africans have complied. This has come at a huge cost, many of them have lost their jobs and their businesses that they have spent years building up.

However, Mr President, you and your government have not played your part in the pandemic, by being transparent with how you have made these decisions and the data and modelling that informs them. You have withheld that all that very top level COVID-19 data from the citizens of this country including the model which you say you relied upon to implement the national lockdown, but then to extend the hardest, longest and the most brutal lockdown in the world during this period.

Mr President, why do you believe that citizens who have sacrificed so much do not have the right to this information? [Applause]

An HON MEMBER: What brutal?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. The information that I have just disclosed now, is information that we did in time disclose. One of those was the most horrific where they said, we are possibly going to see up to 40 000 people dead. Discussing it within our own range we said, there is just no reason why any information, modelling or otherwise should not be disclosed to the South Africans. There is no reason why we should be acting in the dark. Every piece of information about this should be disclosed.

I am very pleased that the Medical Advisory Committee that Dr Mkhize set up to advise government has been able to come up with a number of advisories. Of course, we have seen how the number of members – 51 members of the Medical Advisory Committee have had diverse views. We have not shied away from saying, yes even if they have got diverse views, those diverse views must be heard. We may well have been a bleak along the way, but we said if they have diverse views and if anyone, scientist or otherwise in our country and modellers as we have had chartered accountants actually doing quite a lot of modelling. The consortium of modellers has come up with a lot of modelling. The modelling, truth be told, has come up with such variant types of models. Some of the models have been completely off of the bin and some of them have been beaten a middle path.

I must say that we have not been short of information that should be made available. Honourable Steenhuisen, I am one of those who would say, whatever information there is, yes needs to be put out there in the public. South Africans are very discerning, apart from having made huge sacrifices as you correctly say, they are very discerning, they have been able to make judgements. As the government has led this process, it has led this process honestly with integrity without seeking to hide anything to the people of South Africa.

I have said myself, as there is no textbook on how we should traverse our way on managing this virus, there may be moments where we have had some missteps but in the main, the government of the Republic of South Africa has been straightforward, honest with the people of South Africa, led them with integrity and disclosed information. Our Ministers have been briefing the public on an ongoing basis. With that, has come a lot of information that has been dispersed to our people. The Minister of Health continues to brief the people of South Africa about the progression of the pandemic. The National Coronavirus Command Council meets regularly and through National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure, NatJOINTS that we are able to get the advice not only of the which is on an hourly basis seized with the task of managing the virus process, but also the Medical Advisory Committee.

The various institutions in our country from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, NICD and the many others have been seized with seeking to put forward information to the public of South Africa without hiding the information. Thank you very much Deputy Speaker. [Applause]

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Mr President, on scientific risk assessment, it is your command council which allowed the opening of schools which is now a disaster with

hundreds of schools not having water and personal protective equipment, PPEs. It is your command council that has allowed alcohol despite all the evidence on the contrary to the benefits of alcohol but what a challenge it is to society. It is your command council that took a decision on tobacco, saying that tobacco was harmful but now made an about-turn in court. It is your command council that said, it is safe to travel by air despite the evidence to the contrary that it is not safe to travel by air in a full flight.

Now, what scientific evidence did your command council rely on to take such decision, and very importantly Mr President you repeatedly talk about strict protocols. Hundreds of regulations were made. What measures has your command council put in place to ensure that there is a high level of compliance and to ensure that we limit transmission? Thank you Mr President.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you very much. As I said that in the beginning, the various processes and interventions that we embarked upon as government, have been interventions in the main that have been advised and thoroughly discussed by our experts and our scientists. Obviously, we also had to do the risk assessment as the political leaders of the country, as we’ve implemented this.

For instance, when it comes to opening of schools, we did say that we would not save on to see us losing the year of schooling. What is it that we can do? The Medical Advisory Council’s advice was, so long as we can make sure that there is social distancing, so long as we can ensure that we utilise all the tools in the toolbox, the masks, the handwashing, sanitisers and the young people are properly distanced in the class, they said yes, that can be an option to go for.

We then decided to do what I would call right touch. We said, we are not going to open up all the classes, we are going to open up the two – if you like finishing classes, Grade 7 as well as Grade

12. That is what we decided on, and it was risk adjusted based.

Yes, admittedly as hon Shaik Emam said, many schools have not had the protective equipment. That is being looked at and that is being worked. The Minister of Basic Education is continuously monitoring the availability of all those at all the schools in our country. We have said, even next I announced it I said, if this is not in existence and if parents do not feel satisfied, the schools should not open. That has by a large been adhered to.

Yes of course, there have been infections where young people have been infected and got infections in the schools and that has been immediately identified and measures have been taken.

The view we have taken is that this virus is going to be with us for a long time, possibly for years. We therefore need to live with the virus, manage it and ensure that we adjust the risk and as we do so, ensure that our people are safe but as we move on particularly on the economic side, that we save livelihoods as well.

The issue of alcohol was discussed quite thoroughly at the various structures including the National Coronavirus Command Council. We saw that if we can put in place the various measures of ensuring that, even as we open alcohol at this point in time, we should try and restrict as much as we can. Of course, as we opened it the number of our people in South Africa started going way overboard and as I was saying yesterday, it has led to abuse as well. This is the debate that we should have as a nation. South Africa is one of those countries that abuses and uses quite a lot of alcohol more than many other countries.

We need to be looking at precisely at how we should do this. Could we have banned alcohol forever? Many people will say, no you could not have. When would the right time have been to open it up? Was level 3 the correct time or was it level 1? That is a matter that is still open up for debate.

On the tobacco issue, the tobacco issue is a matter that was discussed extensively and many of our people through various formations participated in the debate and that is what led to the change of decision which we have announced. It was after the participation and the views that we got from our people. Of course now, it is in the hands of the fore.

On the air travel issue, yes we have allowed travel within the country for business purposes. We believe that if for instance the protocols can be observed, we can curb the rate of infection. In the end we do need to accept that this virus is to be with us for a long time. We need to take protective measures to ensure that we do not spread the virus.

Everything has to be on how we can adjust the risk, analyse the risk and arrive at a risk adjusted outcome to move forward, because we cannot in the end remain locked up forever and in a ban. I thank you.

Question 2 (cont):

Ms N V MENTE: Mr President, with all the scientific evidence that the ANC has, you still have not released the statistics from the basis of race of all those who are infected by the disease and those who have passed on. We still want those statistics if that

is the scientific proof to indicate to all South Africans as to who is affected the most by the virus. Secondly, we need details of specific actions that you have taken to ensure that our health system is not overwhelmed when the coronavirus outbreak reaches its peak. We need details on hospitals, and we need to know if health care workers will be enough during the coronavirus peak. We need details on the testing kits that the country has now and the ventilators. We want to know because right now the country has only 3 300 beds, both in public and private hospitals ... [Time expired.] ... And that is not enough to accommodate all the infected ... [Time expired.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon members on the few ANC benches here, you are out of order. You can’t be screaming across here like the way you are doing right now, please. [Interjections.] You too; you too! And you too in the left! You have been doing it together; it’s out of order members. [Interjections.] No, no, you cannot be this orderly. Order! Hon President?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: The hon member would like us to give statistics on a race basis. The statistics available, as accumulated on age and region and all that, I guess have not been classified on a racial basis. The statistics are also available on a gender basis and I think that should have already been made

public - I think it has. The classification on a race basis has not been done but I have heard what the hon member is saying. With regard to the details on hospitals, they is overwhelmed - particularly in relation to our health system. We said that the period of the lockdown from level 5 to level 3 has given our health system the opportunity to be ready by doing a whole lot of new things and to embark on a number of interventions.

We now have for instance a capacity of 404 quarantine facilities with 37 000 beds. A number of them have already been activated - almost 15 000 beds have been activated and we are waiting for the activation of others. Twenty seven thousand and four hundred and sixty four hospital beds have been allocated for Covid-19 patients and of whom we have 2 500 critical care base - of course we need more. I have been at pains as I travel the country telling provinces that we need more of these beds.

We are utilising the period that we are in now to get more of these beds. We need to recruit more health workers as a number of them are also testing positive. We have 1 076 nurses and

163 doctors who have tested positive, but we are going ahead recruiting other health workers - health workers who will come in and start working. All our provinces need more health personnel.

And I have said that within the allocated resources we need to be getting more and more ready.

I have said that we can never be more ready for Covid-19. We almost have to be over prepared because the peak is still coming. And as we reach our peak, as this period of the lockdown must have prepared us for it, we are able to deal with the cases.

Unfortunately, because our health system is at a level where it is, we have been seeing more recoveries – almost 55% recoveries and all this is due to the health system. It is not yet where we want it to be, but at the same time, it is our health system that has been ensuring that those who recover do recover well. Fifty five per cent recoveries is quite a good number, but we would like to see it going higher and higher. I thank you. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Dhlomo - the chair of the committee, it is your turn. That is the question.

Dr S M DHLOMO: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no, no, you have asked the question; now wait for the President to answer. [Interjections.] Is it a supplementary question? Oh yes, I am not against people from Umbundu. May you please talk, my brother. [Laughter.]

Dr S M DHLOMO: Thank you Deputy Speaker, I am asking a supplementary question to the President. In your address to the nation yesterday, hon President, you made reference to a term called doubling time and you explained the term so well last night. There is another term, hon President, that scientists have also used and you have made reference to it now. The term called inflection point. Inflection point for the South Africans is a point at which the epidemic changes from growing slowly to a point where there is an exponential growth. Can the President provide an indication on what may have happened in South Africa if the President did not act before the inflection point, perhaps looking at what happened to countries that acted long after the inflection point? Thank you very much.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: It is still to get an accolade from the medical doctor or medical terms ... [Interjections.] ... Hon Deputy Speaker, if we have not implemented the lockdown when we did, we would be quite easily be speaking about thousands of South Africans having died. And our infection rate would have been much higher than what it is. We have been commended for having moved early and it was not an easy decision - not only for leaders in government, the Cabinet, but also for our people collectively.

The reality of what we needed to do came suddenly and in a way it was when Dr Mkhize came forward and said to me that from a medical point of view this is what they were seeing - that this virus was soon going out of our control unless we act. He paused for a while but in the end as we saw the infections, this was because right at the beginning Dr Mkhize called me twice a day telling me about the increasing number of coronavirus infections. Even as he did, my heart started racing more and more, realising the weighty situation that we were under. It was then that the Cabinet decided that we needed to act quickly; it was collective decision. And as it turned out, it was a correct decision because had we not done so ... and we have done a demonstration, hon Dhlomo, with the graph that I referred to earlier with the UK. I am not putting the UK down or any country down, but those countries that did not act as quickly as they should have found that the infection rate was galloping out of control.

We were rather fortunate. The World Health Organisation, the United Nations, the Africa Centers for Disease Control has complimented South Africa for the measures that we took when we did because the action we took demonstrably flattened the curve. It gave us an opportunity to get ready as we are continuing to get ready by also spreading the message to get South Africans to change their behaviour and to behave in a way that demonstrate

that we are going to live with this virus and that we therefore have to change the way we live. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr President. Hon Thandi Modise - Madam Speaker, are you ready?

The SPEAKER: Yes sir, I am ready.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The Speaker will take over from me from now onwards. Thank you Madam Speaker.

Question 3:

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker and hon members, as I indicated in the earlier reply, our response to the coronavirus pandemic has been informed by the advice of our scientists made up of the Medical Advisory Committee - 51 scientists of various diverse disciplines – and it is also underpinned by the experiences of other countries and the guidance we received from bodies like the World Health Organisation, WHO and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

Much of the scientific input we have received has come from the Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19, which was established

by the Minister of Health. Through the course of the pandemic, the Ministerial Advisory Committee, MAC - which brings together disciplines such as scientists, clinicians, researchers and epidemiologists - has assisted government in various areas of the response. The Committee helped develop the country’s eight-phase strategy, in which a strict lockdown was just one of the phases, with specific objectives and a finite timeframe.

In deciding on when to begin the gradual and systematic easing of the lockdown, government was guided by the views of the scientists, the experience of other countries and wide-ranging consultations. It also took into account the economic and social disruption caused by the lockdown, and the devastating impact it was having on people’s incomes and livelihoods.

In providing guidance, the Ministerial Advisory Committee used the level of community transmission as the basis for determining the state of the pandemic in the country. At that time, the proportion of coronavirus tests that were positive had been consistently low for a long time and had remained in a narrow range of 1,5% to 3,5% for several weeks in all parts of the country except in the Western Cape.

In arriving at this decision, due consideration was given to the criteria suggested by the World Health Organisation for countries to transition from lockdown to re-opening of normal social activities. These criteria are: Firstly, the disease transmission should be under control; secondly, the health systems should be able to detect, test, isolate and treat every case and trace every contact; thirdly, hot-spot risks should be minimised in vulnerable places; fourthly, that schools, workplaces and other essential places should have established preventive measures; fifthly, that the risk of importing new cases can be managed; and lastly, that communities are fully educated, engaged and empowered to live under a new normal, i.e. to live with the virus.

In an advisory to the Minister, the Ministerial Advisory Committee noted that some of the WHO criteria may not be appropriate for South Africa. Unlike several other countries, South Africa deliberately implemented a lockdown early in the progression of the disease as a strategy to delay transmission. I may add here that we were not the only country to immediately implement a lockdown. There were a number of countries that moved as swiftly as we did. There were also countries that did not.

We did this knowing that we would not be able to bring transmission under control by the time we had to ease the

lockdown, but that it would give us the time – as I have been saying - we needed to strengthen our health system and put a comprehensive public health response in place. The WHO has supported South Africa in this approach.

In considering the transition from Alert Level 5 to Alert Level 4 and, subsequently, to Alert Level 3, I engaged with numerous stakeholders including business, labour, community representatives, political party leaders, premiers, mayors, traditional leaders and the religious leaders as well. This we did so that government could have the views of this myriad of stakeholders before transitioning to the next level.

As the National Coronavirus Command Council, we remain committed to consult widely with diverse stakeholders in taking decisions that will both protect the lives of our people and support their livelihoods. It is on this basis that we have been able to take the decisions including delineating certain areas of our country for differentiated type of approaches. The differentiated approach is already showing good signs of benefit.

So, all what we have done was not thumb-sucked. It was properly discussed, properly assessed and it was also benchmarked against what advice we got from the WHO, who are managing this virus

across the world in the most magnificent way because they know what is happening in every country and they intervene with advice and guidance. This is precisely what we have been benefitting from.

We have also been bolstered by our own structure in Africa which has really wrapped its arms around what the continent is doing in terms of a strategy as well as the management of the virus on the continent. So, there has been a lot of advice and views that have been expressed in this regard, and that is what has strengthened us and given us the ability to manage the virus as we have. I thank you.

Mr J S MALEMA: Speaker, thank you very much for coming at a very critical time because the other one would have messed up my session.

The SPEAKER: That’s not necessary, hon Malema. Please proceed with

the supplementary.

Mr J S MALEMA: It is supposed to be necessary to you, Speaker. It is my turn now. What happens, Mr President, is that we are more than convinced that you are actually not following any scientific advice. If anything, you are being bullied by big capital which

maximise profit at all cost because what type of scientific advice will advise that the President of a country should address or answer questions in Parliament, sitting in his home next to a fireplace and allowing children to go to school? The President who has all types of resources can address Parliament ... [Interjections.]

*IsiZulu:*

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZOKUTHUTHUKISWA KOMPHAKATHI: Uyabona umbhedo uqala uma kunje. Umuntu asitshele ngama-fireplace. Uhleli, uhola imali.

The SPEAKER: Hon Zulu, mute your mic!

Mr J S MALEMA: You are sitting comfortably in your own home. As a leader of a country who follows science and your science says, take children to school and the streets to go and fight this pandemic while all of us are in the comfort of our homes, Mr President, do you have any scientific evidence of how many people are going to die due to this pandemic? Have you been given advice as to what we can expect that South Africa will lose so many lives or are you just going as usual without even anticipating or knowing what are the expected infections and deaths within a particular period of time? We know, Mr President, that you are chasing only profits and not lives. You have a history of

sacrificing lives in Marikana for profit and we are now experiencing it again where the lives of children are being compromised ...

The SPEAKER: Hon Malema ... [Interjections.]

AN HON MEMBER: Point of order!

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Well, you should give us solutions. Stop talking and saying what you are saying! Give us solutions.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: You shut up! Shut up!

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Let him tell us. He must stop criticising the President.

The SPEAKER: Hon Malema, hold on!

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: He must stop it!

The SPEAKER: Hon members ... [Interjections.]

AN HON MEMBER: Malema is sitting at home at the fireplace. He is also not in Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, if you have not been recognised to speak, do not unmute that mic. Otherwise, I’ll give instructions to have that mic muted! You’ll respect us because we are on parliamentary business. Hon Malema, wrap up your supplementary.

Mr J S MALEMA: So, there is no science that can say to you, Mr President, it is safe to sell alcohol because you’ll know and science will advise you that once you sell alcohol, the trauma units are going to be overpopulated and we’ll have to divide the resources. [Time expired.]

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker and hon members, we have said repeatedly, and I have said in my main reply that we have been advised by top scientists in our country. We have also benchmarked what we are doing here against what is happening in other parts of the world. Many parts of the world did not do what we did. Our lockdown was hard and we will concede that. We went on to even restrict things that many other countries did not restrict like alcohol, cigarettes and the buying and selling of a number of items. But we knew that with time, we were not going to be able to

keep the lockdown forever. This is because it is impossible to lock any country down forever.

Let me say, many other countries in the world have to deal with the challenges that we are dealing with. Some eased their lockdowns and reverted back to harder lockdowns. Some did not lock down when we did and they have paid the price for it. We have been well-advised to do what we are doing on a gradual basis with the necessary advice. We have explained how the opening up of schools have evolved. Many other countries have opened schools and others have not. As we observed the opening of schools around the world and the protocols they were putting in place - and the advice that we got - we realised that we could do exactly the same but with even harder protocols; and that’s what we opted for.

I have explained the issue of alcohol. I have also explained the issue of tobacco. All this has been well-discussed. Let me even say that the discussions even ensued at the Nedlac level where labour, communities and business are represented. As we moved from level 5, the consultations were quite broad – very broad and detailed. Backed up by the scientific and medical advice, we were able to package all that and said we can move forward on a risk- adjusted basis – adjusting the risk. Of course, it is a risk like everything else would be a risk. But what I would like to

reiterate is that we have been resolutely committed to saving lives. When we took the decision for a lockdown, the overriding objective was to save the lives of South Africans. That continues to guide what we do - it guides our actions.

However, at the same time, we also said that we need to preserve livelihoods. When we introduced or announced the R500 billion assistance package, we knew that for the most part it was going to be a stop-gap measure. It was going to help stabilise the lives of our people. It could not go on forever. That is why even the social grants were time-based. They were not additions to social grants including the Covid-19 R350 which is not forever because we don’t have the resources. But we knew that we needed to act and come in to support the livelihoods of our people. There is no government in the world that can continue to support the livelihoods of its citizens having closed up that which gives them the livelihood, i.e. the economy.

We therefore said that we would open certain sectors of the economy as we have been doing on a gradual basis. We have been seeking to do it in a responsible manner, moving from a very hard lockdown which we knew could not go on forever. For that lockdown to go on forever would mean that our economy would be completely destroyed and the livelihoods of our people would also be

destroyed. As it is now, as a result of the economy having been closed, the revenue base for the taxes that need to be paid right across the board – taxes from personal income, company income, VAT, excise duty on alcohol, and taxes on tobacco – all those have gone down. And the big hole that we now have is almost

R300 billion that we could have had to support services and our people. It was a sacrifice that all of us had to make. We have made the sacrifice. Continuing to close the economy would have meant that we completely wipe out the tax base that we have and possibly even destroy it because some of the companies, hon members, will not be able to reopen and some will be closed for good. That is a huge price to pay because it impacts on the livelihoods.

May I say, in the end, we have not yet counted the number of jobs that would have been lost and that we are going to lose post- Covid-19. As we speak now, many people - and I say this with a heavy heart – are going to lose their jobs! And it is this that this government needs to manage. We were elected to manage precisely this. Hon Speaker, this is what I am determined to manage. Thank you.

Question 3 (cont):

Rev K R J MESHOE: Thank you, Speaker. The ACDP welcomes the President’s announcement last night about the easing of the lockdown restrictions. We have long been calling for the unlocking of the economy. Given that our economy is on a perilous path, even more so now as a result of the lockdown and its effects on the global economy, many more of our citizens find themselves unemployed and struggling to survive, and some children have been admitted to hospitals for malnutrition. As there are some among us who for fear of infection are opposed to the easing of the lockdown, to allay their fears can the hon President please inform the nation who has the final say in terms of preparedness in the workplace and schools, who has the final say in moving the lockdown from one level to the other and ultimately, to end the lockdown altogether? Does the World Health Organisation, WHO, have a say in that decision? I thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker. As I have said before, we as the Cabinet of the Republic of South Africa have the final say because we are elected as the executive of the nation to take decisions. We are the government and we have the final say. The WHO advises us. We work with the WHO, like the Medical Advisory Committee, MAC, that advises government. The National Coronavirus Command Council, NCCC, is an intermediary body that is made up of the President and Ministers, but in the

end it is the Cabinet, and that is why we have taken care that decisions and proposals are discussed at the MAC, at the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure, Natjoints, and then they come to the NCCC. When decisions have to be made on recommendations from all these bodies, it is the national executive ... Cabinet that takes the decisions.

So, as we have moved from level to level, we have taken counsel, we have taken advice, we have taken proposals from a variety of role-players. We are proud of the fact that we could possibly be the only country in the world, that when it takes decisions on major issues, it does consult and it does talk to our people as represented through various formations. However, in the end, yes, the buck stops with the Cabinet of the Republic of South Africa.

Dr C P MULDER: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon President, it is common cause that it is the view of the EFF that the whole country should remain at level 5 and in a total lockdown indefinitely. It is also known that it is the strategy of the EFF to gain total control of the economy. In order to achieve that, the hon leader of the EFF recently made his view clear when he said that lockdown should continue so as to have the white economy — whatever that may mean

— collapse.

Mr President, you made the point earlier today ... [Interjections.] ... that post-COVID we will be confronted by a post-war economic landscape and that we need a balanced strategy. Is it your view and the view of your government that certain sectors of our economy first needs to collapse before we get South Africa through this economic crisis?

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Mkhaliphi, stop it! The hon the President?

Mr J S MALEMA: Hon Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Hon Julius, I’m not taking points of order.

Mr J S MALEMA: No, on a point of order: That Afrikaner can’t speak

for me.

The SPEAKER: No, no, hon Malema, we are not doing that. We are in a Question Session. Hon President, take the platform and respond.

Mr J S MALEMA: [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Hon President, you have the floor.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, the government of the Republic of South Africa has been charged with the responsibility of advancing the lives and livelihoods of all South Africans. That is the responsibility we have. We’ve also been charged with the responsibility of managing the economy of the Republic of South Africa, safeguarding our economy, advancing it, restructuring it and repositioning it. It so happens that post-COVID-19, we will have to reset our economy, restructure it so that it can benefit all the people of South Africa and grow it on an inclusive basis.

Therefore, we cannot countenance a situation where we could see a collapse of any section of our economy. As it is now, some sections or sectors of our economy are actually on their knees.

For instance, I cite tourism. Tourism is one of those sectors that has been negatively affected to a point where a number of companies in the tourism field may not survive or may not come back. Our task is to see how best we can help the operators of those entities in tourism, how we can support those companies and how we can protect the workers ... rather their jobs; protect the jobs and indeed protect the workers as well in the various sectors of our economy.

Our approach and our thrust is to boost the various sectors of our economy but we want to do it on a collective basis where all South

Africans participate in advancing the fortunes if you like of all South Africans. I thank you.

Mr M G MAHLAULE: Thank you very much, Speaker. The hon the President, please find comfort in the fact that the members of the ANC that you lead are in the Chamber. They are back at work. The same thing can’t be said about the EFF. [Interjections.]

It is disingenuous for parties that pretend to be Marxists to present government’s policy choices in combatting COVID-19 as ... [Interjections.] ... a false dilemma; a choice between either saving lives or saving livelihoods. That simplistic choice is just not available to our government.

Now, President, the question is what has government learnt from consultations with various stakeholders that has helped it to arrive at the decision to implement the risk adjusted strategy, and does the President believe that our people are capable of taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing with the support of government or does government need a nanny state as other political parties are suggesting?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker. I’d like to

start off by explaining a difficult decision that we took to

answer questions online on this platform. Soon after answering these questions, I have to participate and lead a process at a continental level, which is being done on a platform that is quite different to other platforms but which only exists where I am. I have to lead a process of launching the continental procurement platform that we are putting together which is going to be responding to COVID-19. We agonise quite a lot about whether I should come to Parliament or do it from this base where I am. It is only for that reason that soon after this, in fact 30 minutes or an hour hereafter, I have to join other heads of state to launch this platform. I truly apologise. I would’ve wanted to be in Parliament.

Coming to hon Mahlaule’s question, in arriving at a risk adjusted strategy, we consulted quite extensively and we listened to quite a number of formations around the country. In fact, one could ask whether we didn’t overconsult**,** but we felt it was necessary to hear the views of various stakeholders in our country.

In our consultations with each, when it came to their own sectors, they said they were prepared and able to risk adjust ... to adjust the risks, to respond to the risks and to mitigate the risks that would be obtained in the opening of any sector or any economic activity. And, in our process of consultation, we were satisfied

and in fact we were heartened by the manner in which the various leaders of the various sectors came forward with suggestions themselves. However, what was even more heartening was the fact that they were prepared to bear the costs of even setting up field hospitals and setting up isolation centres if it was found that any of the people who either worked in various places or went there were then isolated and could get treatment.

So, we didn’t just fly blindly into this. It was through consultation and thorough risk adjustment. Role-players said, we now accept that living with the coronavirus is going to be part of our existence. We now have to acclimatise; we now have to embrace it and live with it as much as we possibly can and utilise the tools that the MAC has said we should have in our toolbox. If all those measures that I’ve spoken about [ad](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/ad) nauseam are followed and if they are adhered to, we will be able to have a proper risk adjusted strategy that will enable us to coexist with the virus.

Question 4:

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, hon members, just before the coronavirus outbreak in our country, Cabinet approved the Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme. This programme is aimed at putting township and rural enterprises at the centre of economic growth.

According to research commissioned by the Department of Small Business Development, the informal sector has a central role in the South African economy as it accounts for 18% of total employment and contributes towards the livelihoods of millions of South Africans.

The pandemic has assisted with the implementation of this critical intervention, which seeks to bring marginalised people and areas into the mainstream of the economy. As part of our package of responses to the pandemic, we have been providing financial and nonfinancial assistance to the informal sector to cushion workers from the economic effects of COVID-19.

We have also taken measures to support households that rely on income from informal businesses by topping up social grants over a six-month period and introducing a special COVID-19 grant of R350 per month over six months for unemployed people.

Financial assistance to informal businesses has taken the form of grants, loans and credit facilities that informal businesses can access to sustain their businesses. The nonfinancial interventions include business development support services that help informal businesses to improve their business management capabilities. This will assist informal businesses should they wish to make the

transition to micro-, small- and medium-sized businesses, SMMEs, in the formal sector. This would make it easier for them to benefit from government incentives, SMME programmes and procurement opportunities.

The Department of Small Business Development has introduced programmes that are targeted at specific subsectors of the informal economy; this informal economy which other people have called a second economy. To cite some examples: over the medium term, these programmes aim to support 100 000 spaza shops and general dealers; 50 000 artisanal businesses; 15 000 hairdressers, beauticians and other personal care businesses; 50 000 vegetable street vendors and butcheries; and 10 000 informal restaurants. I learned the other day that we have some 70 000 restaurants in our country. We are now focusing on those that we never see and that are not registered but that serve the majority of our people.

Other programmes include the small-scale automotive aftermarket support scheme to support 5 000 informal businesses over 12 months, and the bakeries and confectionaries support programme which targets 3 500 businesses over 12 months.

Some of these programmes have already been implemented and are gaining traction. Through these programmes, which prioritise

black-owned, youth-owned and female-owned SMMEs, thousands of jobs have been saved and a significant number of SMMEs have been kept alive and in business.

What COVID-19 has presented us with is a real opportunity to focus much more in practical terms – on the ground – on supporting all these informal businesses to the point at which we have now entered interesting terrain in that they are being formalised. We are now building a database of knowing who the operators are, which address they operate from, which street they are located in, what their needs are and what type of service they offer. This has been a most empowering process for government, because we have come much closer to where our people are conducting business, just as with this offering of R350 in that we have been able to get the records – a database – of close to 7 million people who had largely not even been on our grant system or on any other system.

We now have this database and, in other words, it’s possible that we could be the only country on the continent that has now built a really valuable database, as government, of knowing exactly what we are dealing with and what services and what interventions we can make. On the business side, this is what COVID-19 has yielded for us. Hon Speaker, I thank you.

Mr F JACOBS: Thank you very much, hon President, for your comprehensive recovery plan for small businesses and indeed for the informal sector. I’m very proud to be a South African currently, because you are a caring and a listening President. All of these steps will certainly help ease the burden, especially of the informal sector.

The follow-up question that I have is: How will we ensure that government, through public-private partnerships, increases support for the Buy South Africa, Buy Local and Local is Lekker campaigns, increases localisation through municipalities and public-private procurement, and ensures that we give more opportunities to township and rural economies?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker and hon members, through these interventions that we are embarking on, one of the things that even our Ministry of Small Business Development is stressing, on a continual basis, is that we want localisation to be the order of the day. The Ministry of Trade and Industry, in competition, is also stressing that to the point at which they are actually going through the lists of products that we procure offshore. They are now dutifully going to the various companies and even to SMMEs and asking: Why are we continuing to buy this and this and this offshore? As we ask the questions, those

companies and operators raise their hands and say, “You are absolutely right.” That is the way in which we begin the process of reindustrialising our economy, of boosting manufacturing and of beginning to move in the way of gaining efficiencies, so that we become competitive and compete, firstly, in our own country and, secondly, on the African continent as we set up the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCTA, and as we go global.

I have also met a number of young people who are committed to the localisation approach and who are saying, “Yes, we would like support, but what we are now moving towards is to sell South Africa; make things in South Africa and sell them globally.” And this is the new wave and we are going to be propagating this, spreading the message, and also saying to those that we even give incentives to that we want to support more of those businesses that are going to buy local so that we can create jobs.

Other countries have grown their economies by localising and making sure that their jobs remain in their countries. That is the trajectory that we are on now. Even as we embark on private-public partnerships, that is precisely the message that we will be pushing. Localisation has to be the order of the day.

I would like to encourage South Africans, as you buy something, to check on the label to see where it is made. I would like our officials to be doing exactly the same thing. We need to be asking ourselves where items are made and if we could make them here and begin to advance to being competitive and being able to make items cheaper. South Africans have the capability. We have the innovativeness to do all of this and making things a lot cheaper.

I’ve told the story of how one day when I walking I met a young man who said: I’ve been supported, Mr President, by the IDC. We have been running a business importing medical supplies. Since COVID-19, an announcement was made that we wanted to localise. I admitted that I had imported a machine, but that I am now making this item and that item and that item. Items that I used to import, I am now making here in South Africa. He said, “That’s not all, Mr President. I now employ 75 more people.” He said that he was starting his manufacturing base as we were opening to Level 3. He said, “I’ve been getting ready and I’m now going to make these items here in the country.” These items happened to be gloves, they happened to be masks, they happened to be PPE, and he is now going to make them. We are now going to put that person on the continental platform, which we are launching tonight, so that he can then sell.

This is going to start a wave, a wave that we must all encourage, rather than scoff at, rather than dismiss, rather than write off. This is a wave that, one, we need to be aware of; two, we need to encourage; three, we need to support in all ways that we can.

Thank you, hon Speaker.

Ms H DENNER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Mr President, the Presidential Jobs Summit of 2018 resolved to create 275 000 jobs per year. Taking into account that there has been little movement on this target and the loss of potentially millions of existing jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is it wise for your Minister of Employment and Labour, who had every possible opportunity, to vilify the employers of South Africa, and does your government realise that there can be no employees and absolutely no job- creation without employers and sufficient support for them? I thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker. I have not been aware of any vilification. What I have been aware of is when the Minister of Employment and Labour has been urging employers, particularly in the time of COVID-19, to make sure that they safeguard the safety of their workers.

Now, some of these things are rather painful when one looks at what some employers have not been doing. The Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy reports that he went to a mine where infections had been reported. When he got there he found that there was no sanitising, no masks were in place and all the protocols that we have spoken about were not in place. Next door to that mine, was another mine where everything that we have spoken about was in place, and their levels of infections were much lower.

Now, this is precisely what the Minister would have been responding to. I don’t see that as vilification, but rather as encouraging all employers in our country to put the lives of their workers first to make sure that we safeguard the lives of our workers as we seek to advance their livelihoods.

We cannot be focusing on just opening up companies and disregarding the safety measures and the safety protocols that need to be in place. That is precisely the approach that I believe Minister Nxesi would have been taking. Minister Mantashe took exactly the same approach when he came across a most worrying situation at a particular mine.

So, we are saying that we need to be working together, we need to be co-operating and we need to heed the words that we should make places of employment safe and that we should secure the lives of our employees. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Question 4 (cont):

Mr X NGWEZI: Hon Speaker, to the hon President, you have mentioned that small businesses and rather informal economies in the whole world are able to employ more than 60% to 70% of our people, and we cannot overemphasise that as the IFP and Members of Parliament.

I would like to know from you, as you were giving answers to this question, that on lessons learned in addressing the difficulties that small businesses and informal traders have in this country, do we have a permanent strategy that will assist small businesses in getting finance? I’m asking this because you find that those who are supposed to assist them with money have requirements that are not friendly to small business enterprises and therefore they can’t get financed. The question is: On the lessons learned, do we have a permanent strategy to address the difficulties that these institutions are facing? Thank you. [Interjections.]

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Should I answer, hon Speaker?

An HON MEMBER: Yes, Mr President, I give you the go ahead. Thank you. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: And who are you?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: I will wait for the Speaker to give me the go ahead.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: No, answer, we are listening. Answer. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you, Mr President. Wait for the Speaker and not these ones; they are not speakers. They are not speakers; the Speaker will come through. [Interjections.]

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: You are not even paying people the R350, just keep quiet. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: My apologies ... [Interjections.]

*IsiZulu:*

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZOKUTHUTHUKISWA KOMPHAKATHI: Uyayifuna yini le R350?

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon members, I am back. [Interjections.] Order! Order, hon members, order! [Interjections.] I did not run away, hon Ndlozi. [Interjections.] Hon Ngwezi, did you conclude your question?

Mr X NGWEZI: Yes, hon Speaker, I was finished.

The SPEAKER: Hon President, did you get the gist of hon Ngwezi’s

supplementary question?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Yes, I did, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Please speak on it, hon President.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon members, yes, I got the gist of the question. The challenge of finance for small and medium enterprises is a serious one. If you ask many people who lead small and medium enterprises a question about what their challenges are, they will tell you that finance is one of the key ones. They do have other challenges and other needs as well but the need for finance is an urgent and important one and we have recognised that it needs to be addressed.

It is for this reason that the Department of Small Business Development is setting up a fund that is going to respond to this and at the same time urging banks to finance small and medium enterprises. During this period of Covid-19 an amount of

R200 billion has been set aside to assist small and medium enterprises. We want our small and medium enterprises to approach financial institutions and be able to get funding from this money that has been guaranteed by government and the central bank.

Through this we want to start deepening the culture of supporting small and medium enterprises in the financial services.

I have been pleased to see how the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, has been able to assist businesses that have been started by young people. When we did our state of the nation address announcements we did say that through the NYDA we would like young people to start 1000 businesses and be supported. A total of 500 of those have been supported and they are functioning and we are now looking forward to the additional 500.

The support measures have ranged from financial support, advice assistance, market assistance and a whole range of others including mentoring. This is precisely what small and medium enterprises need. They also need to be well supported by their own government so that government is able to use them for various

procurement processes. It is, therefore, in this very area that set asides should be the order of the day so that small and medium enterprises are able, once they have business, to go to financial institutions with offtake agreements knowing that their businesses are sustainable and they are therefore fundable.

So, through this, we want to develop a new culture that is going to be very supportive to small and medium enterprises. It is for this reason that we are also surging into rural areas and townships to support those businesses. The support will vary from financial, mentoring, marketing, business assistance and business management. So, now we want to be a fully-fledged entrepreneurial state which will support businesses. It is through the support of businesses that we are able to increase employment of our people. Thank you, Speaker.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, to the President, let us be clear: Small, medium and micro enterprises are the engine room of job creation. Let us also be clear that that government has not released the data as you alluded to earlier; we have a pile of applications outstanding. Let us also be clear that your response is not being science-led; the scientists were telling you weeks ago to open the economy and the lockdown had done its work. Now, even though it came two months too late, and the fact that

your protective hard lockdown has now severely damaged the economy, last night you announced that significant parts of the economy will now be reopened. The lockdown is all but over in name only; you are the only person who still believes that we are in lockdown advance level three – whatever that means.

Given this, why do you insist on keeping us in a state of disaster and what can you do under a state of disaster that you cannot do under the ordinary course of governance?

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Maimane was better.

The SPEAKER: Order! Mr President, you have the floor.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Speaker, we have given full consideration to how progression from level 5 to level 3 and even the advance level 3 is continuing to open the economy. We have been able to, in consultations with players in each of the sectors, agree that to have done it earlier would have caused problems and it is therefore better to move on a gradual basis.

The real players on the ground in those sectors are the ones who have come forward to say that they believe that it is now time.

I have had extensive meetings, hon Steenhuisen, with a number of those players and they are the ones who have said that maybe not now. A good example of this will be the religious leaders. They came forward and said that they want to pray and they are ready to pray, and when we did finally accede on a risk adjusted basis they were the first ones to say they are actually not as ready as they thought they were and they would like to delay right through to September.

All modelling scenarios have been made public through press conferences by Health as well as through the website of Health. Those models have been demonstrated and have been shown but in the end you are asking why are we keeping the country in the state of disaster. It is precisely the answer I gave earlier.

The state of lockdown has given us the opportunity to get ready and ensure that our health services can adjust. As we see now in a number of places, we are not as ready as we should have been. The Western Cape is the case in point and we are now beginning to see that also in the Eastern Cape, but indeed the Western Cape is the case in point.

The level of infections that are arising there is, in part, because a number of processes that should have been in place were

not in place at the time when they should have. So, it is a risk adjusted process and I can assure you that the country is not going to be kept under lockdown for ever and in a day. We are going to keep adjusting as we manage the risk downwards to level 2, to level 1 and to a point where we agree that we are living with this virus and we must get on with our lives and also run the economy on the safe side. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, on a point of order

... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order, hon Steenhuisen?

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: The point of order is that my question was very specific to the President. It was: What can you do under the Disaster Management Act that you cannot do under the ordinary course of government? [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: He is

totally out of order.

The SPEAKER: Hon Makwetla, I am quite capable; I will respond to hon Steenhuisen as soon as I have heard what he has to say. Hon Steenhuisen, can you finish your point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, my point of order was that I asked the President a specific question. What can he do under the state of Disaster Management Act that he cannot do under the ordinary cause of government? Now that the lockdown has ... [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: You must give the answer to that ...

*IsiZulu:*

... angithi uhlakaniphe kakhulu wena.

The SPEAKER: Hon Zulu, can I respond to Mr Steenhuisen? Hon Steenhuisen, you put a supplementary question and you were responded to. If you are not happy with that response from the President, please put it in writing and let us see where it goes. You cannot, after you have been given a response, demand a response that you think he should have given you. Can we proceed? [Interjections.] We are proceeding, hon members. Hon Ndlozi, what point of order are you rising on? [Interjections.]

*IsiZulu:*

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZOKUTHUTHUKISWA KOMPHAKATHI: Bayeyisa, yileyo

indaba yabo.

Mr J J MCGLUWA: Ice boy ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon McGluwa, you will withdraw that. Hon Ndlozi, what is your point of order?

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Hon Speaker, with the greatest respect, can you save us from hon Lindiwe Zulu’s harassment on the virtual platform?

*IsiZulu:*

...nengubo ekhanda.

*English:*

We are tired with her now. Please remind her to keep quiet. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: You too must keep quiet.

*IsiZulu:*

Uhlushwe yini wena lungu elihloniphekile?

The SPEAKER: Hon Zulu! Hon Ndlozi, I heard you and it is sustained. Hon Lindi Zulu, please. [Interjections.] We are moving to Question 5, hon President. [Interjections.] Hon members, no!

Question 5:

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, hon members, there are sufficient law enforcement agencies to deal with incidents of corruption. These include institutions like the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation in the SA Police Service, SAPS, and the Special Investigating Unit, SIU.

The Office of the Auditor-General and the Financial Intelligence Centre, FIC, also play important roles in detecting instances of corruption.

As I said earlier, the Auditor-General will be taking additional measures, including proactive auditing, to ensure the proper use of Covid-19 funding.

We have also established the NPA’s Investigating Directorate to focus on corruption cases arising from the Zondo Commission of Inquiry into State Capture and on cases arising other commissions.

We also have a progressive legislative framework for addressing the escalating number of investigations, prosecutions and trials of serious forms of corruption. These include the Prevention of

Organised Crime Act and the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act.

I am advised that the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster is undertaking work to revamp the criminal justice system, which will include the strengthening of governance arrangements, intelligence-driven and prosecution-led investigations, and mechanisms for the recovery of ill-gotten proceeds.

We therefore take the view that the establishment of a new independent Chapter 9 institution to focus on grand corruption might not be necessary at this stage. However, we should continue to consider all available options to ensure that we eradicate corruption across society. I thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr N SINGH: Thank you, hon President for your response. However, in your response ... I recall about a year ago when I asked you the question and you said it was a very refreshing idea.

Hopefully, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has not made this idea disappear into the intensive care unit and eventually disappear all together. Because, hon President, as you said earlier, I believe it is now more than ever before that we need to ensure that the very limited resources we have at our disposal and which we now require to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic are

protected. We need to ensure that those resources are protected from thieves within the Public Service and the private sector. We need to ensure that those resources are protected from those who want to defraud the state and the rob poor taxpayers of their money.

Hon President, the response that you gave us this afternoon is exactly the response I received to a written question to the hon Minister of Justice in which he mentioned some of the instruments and organs that you have spoken about today. We all know very well that some of these organs were captured. The NPA, for example, was captured. We know that many of these organs operate at the behest of Parliament and the executive in that, whilst the decisions may be impartial when they consider a particular matter, their existence depend heavily on the resources they receive from Parliament and the executive. So, politicians have an influence on how they operate – not on their independence but on their capacity to operate.

My question is, Mr President, please don’t kill the idea because it is needed now more than ever before. We need an independent institution to deal with this scourge in our society. Thank you, Speaker.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, I will say this to hon Singh: I continue to see it as a refreshing idea. It is still refreshing, and it is an idea that that I think we should keep on the table, particularly because the Criminal Justice Cluster is looking at proposals on how to revamp our criminal justice system. So, hopefully, the idea will not head to the ICU, but will remain as fresh in your mind as it will in mine. Thank you.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Mr President, you struggled with my earlier question on the Disaster Management Act. So, let me ask you an easier one. At the beginning of the lockdown during your public address to the nation, you indicated that you would deal harshly with Covid-related corruption. Can you tell me how many ANC councillors have been arrested for food parcel manipulation during the course of the Covid-19 crisis? There is a saying that charity begins at home. What action have you taken as the leader of your party?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you very much. Hon Speaker, I will take a rain cheque on that one because the information regarding food parcel misdemeanours is in the process of being put together.

Going back to your earlier question, I thought I had answered it. I am prepared to reiterate my answer. Lockdown is being managed downwards from level 5 to level 1 and the disaster management provisions remain the tools that government has to continue managing this lockdown. What we also announced yesterday adds up to a lessening and loosening of restrictions.

The Disaster Management Act is still absolutely necessary and that is why its timeframe was extended. For as long as we have to manage Covid-19 or the coronavirus, we will continue to do so in terms of the Disaster Management Act because it gives us the optionality, it gives us the ... [Inaudible.] ... and, of course, the authority to craft the rules and regulations that guide us as we manage the virus in the way that we have to date. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Hon President, we agree that the Office of the Public Protector has been empowered to investigate both state affairs and public administration. We also agree that the National Prosecuting Authority has been empowered to investigate and prosecute crimes. But, Mr President, the problem is not the incapacity of those offices. The problem is, firstly, a lack of resources and, secondly, political interference, as demonstrated by the conduct of your executive towards the Office of the Public

Protector in particular. Mr President, to you ... we have seen you drag the public prosecutor to court and various other ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Maotwe, you may lay whatever ... but the question you are putting as a supplementary is supposed to be related to the principal question and ... [Inaudible.] ... your time.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: It is! I don’t understand why you don’t have

patience with me because I have not even gone 30 seconds.

The SPEAKER: Because you are required put a supplementary question; you are not.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: I have enough minutes, Speaker, can you relax?

The SPEAKER: You’ve got what? You’ve got what?

Ms O M C MAOTWE: The President is ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: No, no, no, hon Maotwe, what is it that you say you have?

Ms O M C MAOTWE: I have 60 seconds.

The SPEAKER: It is 60 seconds now?

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Yes, I am on it, hon Speaker, and I am well aware

...

The SPEAKER: It is ticking.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Mr President, can you guarantee that you and your executive will back off and allow the Public Protector, Mme Mkhwebane, to do her job? Please! Thank you.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Litchfield-Tshabalala was better.

Dr M Q NDLOZI: On a point of order, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order, hon Ndlozi?

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Hon Speaker, I think the way in which you dealt with hon Maotwe is really unfortunate. You have been indulging all members who have been asking questions like hon John Steen. And now ...

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Litchfield-Tshabalala was better.

Dr M Q NDLOZI: ... you are [Inaudible.] ... hon Maotwe. It is very unfair to her, hon Speaker. I really need you to reconsider and not push her in that way. It will be seen as both antiwomen but also as generally frustrating the opposition.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Yes, yes, you are anti-EFF!

The SPEAKER: Hon Mkhaliphi, that mic will be put off!

Hon members, a member who is not the principal poser of the question has a minute to ask a supplementary question. I was telling hon Maotwe to move towards putting that question because her time was running out. Now we will keep to the Rules with all of you. Hon Steenhuisen, we will keep to the time. But also remember that you are not expected to bring a new question as a supplementary question. Please, remember that. Hon President?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker. I would like to put it on record quite categorically that the executive will not in way, shape or form seek to interfere in the work of any of our Chapter 9 institutions. Those institutions are part of the constitutional infrastructure of our democracy. They are independent and our democracy dictates that they should not be hampered in any way whatsoever in the work that they do.

I can say categorically that the executive does not have the disposition to want to interfere in the work of any of those institutions. And, even if we wanted to, we would not be able to because our actions would then be unconstitutional. We have to act within the parameters and the strictures of our Constitution at all times.

In the end, if any of those institutions had even an inkling that the executive was interfering in their processes, they would have every right to approach the highest court in our land to raise the issue of executive interference, executive overreach and executive hampering of the work that they do. That we will not do. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr S N SWART: Hon President, arising from your earlier response, urgent steps need to be taken now to protect Covid-19 relief funds. This includes real-time auditing which the ACDP supports.

You also referred to the SIU. The SIU has an extensive powers, including the power to bring cases before a special tribunal, to cancel contracts and to recover funds. The SIU recently briefed Parliament on Covid-19-related corruption. However, as we know, it and other units are constrained by funding challenges, and the SIU, by the protracted approval process for its proclamations.

Mr President, will you ensure that sufficient funding is made available to the SIU and similar units and, more importantly, ensure that the presidential proclamation sought by the SIU to investigate Covid-19-related corruption is approved by your Office without delay? These measures can further protect Covid-19 funds. I thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, my answer is in the affirmative. Yes, we want to financially empower all these investigating units. From time to time, we are able to sit down with them and see the gaps in their funding and their needs. We have always insisted that we need to capacitate them financially so that they can have all the personnel they need to do their work. That we will continue to do.

When it comes to proclamations, yes, those proclamations will be signed. Particularly now – in the period of Covid-19 – they will be activated so that we are able to get to the gist and the bottom of those misdemeanours that may be committed under the guise of Covid-19. Thank you very much.

Question 6:

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Speaker, hon members, even before

the coronavirus pandemic South Africa’s economy has been

experiencing below growth over a number of years. Despise significant progress since the advent of democracy, our country remains characterised by high levels poverty, inequality and unemployment. The pandemic has exposed some of the structural point line in our economy, including the vulnerability of small businesses and also those businesses that are in the formal economy line, therefore as we repair the damage that has been caused by the pandemic, we will be implementing measures to address the key structural constrains in the economy.

These structural constrains include the mismatch between skills that we have and the skills that are required in the twenty first century economy and the special patterns of developments that keep millions of our people, workers and all, far away from work places. We will also need to address the reality of a poorly developed small-medium business sector within an economy that has large concentration of market share and ownership, the ownership residing in just a few white hands. We will need to provide access to capital for many young entrepreneurs. We will need to provide this access to capital also to women led and owned enterprises, as well as black industrialists.

As we build the economy after coronavirus, we will speed up structural reforms that can unleash enterprise and capitalise on

big ... [Inaudible.] economy and the larger markets that are possible through the African Continental Free Trade Area. But we will also seek to establish new sectors of our economy, sectors that will be given to employ more people, sectors that will be able to absorb many people who are unemployed. We will also need to focus on current sectors of our economy through finalising industry master plans that have been developed in sectors such as automobile, manufacturing the clothing and textile, poultry production and the sugar industry.

They include the reforms in energy policy and the decision to release spectrum in the market and the competition market requirements that are beginning to have an impact on the data prices. We use to focus on [Inaudible.] ...areas like trading spaces which is part of the special development and health care provision. Now, if we are to achieve an inclusive economy we need to deal with historical injustices in relation to land ownership, in relation to access to it and the use of land. Expediting the land reform for no productive economy without weakening our fiscal position, will require among other things; social compact between the state and the private sector, particularly land owners on how we are going to go about implementing our land reform policies.

The initiative by companies to donate land to the state and there are quite a number of those, is an indication of what is possible if we share a common vision as a country. Our approach must be diverse, we must be able to utilise various options to empower our people and to make sure that land is in the hands of our people.

Another example is the power’s initiative in the Witzenberg Valley, where commercial farmers have been working with local communities and farm workers to promote land reform. Government is working with agricultural industry to develop a sector plan which will focus on glut areas such as livestock, wool and grain industries.

I have been quite interested in recent selling of livestock where we have seen a number of black farmers participating in buying livestock in larger numbers than we had before, which indicates that an inclusive targeted initiative could have the potential to transform, even not only the livestock or the grain sector of the industry and many other parts of the agricultural industry. The release of state-owned land and post settlement support has commenced. Over 100 000 hectares have already been allocated to successful beneficiaries and the intention is to lease all the remaining 700 000 hectares by the end of the financial year. The Deputy President has been working doggedly with the various ministers in piloting this process.

Transformation must be pursued with great vigour so that we have more equitable outcomes and a greater number of jobs. It is possible to be with in a number of sectors of our industries, above all building a more inclusive economy will enhance longer term growth, productivity and the development that we all want to see. And if all of us, role players play our role, be bold and be committed in ensuring that we actually move South Africa forward, through ensuring that there is inclusive growth, it can be done. I thank you.

Dr P J GROENEWALD: Hon President, when you addressed the South African National Editors’ Forum, you said that COVID-19 provided a golden opportunity to get rid of the colonial and apartheid economy and that’s why my question is specifically about, how are you going to do it. You’ve made a lot of statements now, and I think everybody in South Africa knows by now what you want to do, you want to restructure, but unfortunately we don’t get the detail and that is what I mean by ‘how are going to do it’. By referring to the golden opportunity hon President, I think, indirectly you actually saying that we cannot blame the colonial past and apartheid for the future of the economy and my follow up question is as follows: Don’t you think that this a golden opportunity to get rid of black economic empowerment, get rid of affirmative action, you have asked the youth to get involved in building South

Africa, does that include all the youth, does that include Black, White, Coloured and Indian and seeing in the like of State of Secretary...[Inaudible.][Interjected.]

The SPEAKER: ... your time, your time hon Groenewald, conclude...

Dr P J GROENEWALD: ... Speaker, sorry I saw that I have got two minutes and I got a clock right now...and at this moment is not even two minutes, yes...can I ask to make my follow up please?

The SPEAKER: Conclude please.

Dr P J GROENEWALD: Thank you, the last follow up hon President is; in the light of the words of the State of Secretary from the United State of America, that said that expropriation without compensation will be disastrous for the economy of South Africa, do you still continue with that? I thank you, hon Speaker, thank you, hon President.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: The answers to those questions are very straight forward. Black Economic Empowerment, BEE, broad base black economic empowerment policy trust of this government, if anything needs to be enhanced. We need to ensure that black people who were forever under apartheid rule and colonial rule excluded

from playing an important role in the economy of their country are given their rightful position in playing an important role in the economy of their country. This is something that has to be done without any failure. We cannot continue having an economy that so excludes the majority of the people. I believe that we can grow the economy.

I often said hon Groenewald, our economy actually is a damaged economy because it is not utilising all the resources, all what it can utilise, person power resources, the financial resources and the natural resources of the country. We are not utilising to good effect, to drive our economy to move forward. It’s like a you’ve got a vehicle with 12 cylinders, it’s just been operating forever and a day on four cylinders. It cannot be and the only way we can is to bring black people into the mainstream of the economy and because they were deliberately excluded through laws, through policies, through conventions and practices, we got to ensure that we implement the provisions of our Constitution.

The Constitution says in order for us to attain equality, we’ve got to have legislative measures that will enable us to do precisely that. So BEE, is here to stay, we must bring black people into the economy our country, otherwise we will continue having an economy that continues to misfire. We cannot have an

economic situation where the majority of the people are excluded, they don’t have ownership, they don’t have control, they don’t even have management. It should be a shame, a shame on those who have always power and ownership that we still have a situation like this.

Affirmative action as well, is the policy of the government and it will continue. We have extended a hand that on land reform, our Constitutional Committee and Parliamentary Committee must proceed to finalise the work that they are doing. We want to see that committee reappointed so that it finalises and once it finalises that we will all be very clear on the issue of the expropriation of land without compensation. We will also be clear on how it is going to be done and how is it going to be effected. [Inaudible.]

... as South African, we must accept that we’ve got to change because if we do not do so, it is those who have been excluded from the economy of our country who are going to respond and then all could be lost.

The best that we can do as South Africans is to work together. We need to work together to say how do we secure a common future together going forward, because the current situation hon Groenewald is untenable. We’ve to restructure and those who say everything is fine and hunky-dory are actually living in a world,

that you know is very strange to the majority of our people. Our people are yearning for inclusion, they are yearning for participating in the economy of their country, they are yearning to have the skills that they were denied in the past, they are yearning to be owners, they are yearning to be managers of the economy, they are yearning to participate and if there ever was the time for us to give them that opportunity, this is the opportunity!

What I would have wanted to hear from hon Groenewald, is for hon Groenewald and his ilk coming forward and saying, like many others are doing and saying; we realise that we’ve got a historic problem, apartheid excluded the majority of Black South Africans for land ownership, from ownership in the economy, this is what we think we should do. I would have preferred for them to come forward with proposal rather than coming forward with bearers, impediments and problems. We want solutions and our people have been patient forever and in a day and they have been waiting for solutions and I am saying hon Groenewald, let us work together.

Not shame solutions but real solutions that are going to be impactful on the livelihoods of our people. How do you we get an inclusive economy should not be preoccupying you, in your mind and everything you do, rather than... let us continue holding on to the privileges that white people have always had in this country.

Anybody wants to be privileged and the past dispensation that we had in this country, which gave privileges to white people is not sustainable, it has actually served this country very, very badly.

Our economy is where it is today because this country in the past focused on just a few and giving privileges to a few people and not advancing privileges to all and the sharing was just a few people who shared and we are saying the only way to move forward- and hon Groenewald that’s where we the world is going today. The world is saying, let’s have an inclusive growth, let us growth that will advance anybody’s interest because it has been seeing that where you are actually partial and just looking after the sectional interest of the few, your country never moves forward. Now, we want South Africa to move forward and the only way to do so is the inclusive growth on everything, on land, on ownership of companies, on everything we must be inclusive. Thank hon Speaker.

Question 6 (cont):

Mr B H HOLOMISA: Hon President, you are coming up with solutions. Given that since 1994, there has been no consensus on a microeconomic policy for South Africa with different views - even within the tripartite alliance, that has impacted on the implementation of many policies, including the National Development Plan today. It should also be taken into consideration

that using pension monies would be no big objective or no big goal for empowering black people as it had serious challenges as you have seen through party commission. Beneficiaries who became instant billionaires and millionaires are not servicing their loans, whilst respected struggle stalwarts have been used as friends for companies such as Steinhoff and others. Others have partnered with their friends outside South Africa without benefit for poor South Africans in terms of job creation. Today, billions of workers’ pension monies have been written off. That said, as part of positioning our economy post-Covid-19 and while establishing a separate national fund to drive the economic empowerment, what are your views to hold an urgent economic indaba where all stakeholders can discuss the macroeconomy at the apex of the debate? Thank you, sir.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, hon members, the idea of starting up the fund is to help to fund those who need finance to run businesses. Our need to make financial interventions must always be seen as a good thing because what the economy needs is finance, and what many people want to be key players in the economy need is finance. So, if you can get the financial resources to fund various interventions, that would be a good thing. This is also important because our country has a few financial institutions. Many other countries have a plethora of

banks and other financial institutions. We have four or five banking institutions. If one banking institution refuses you funding, it is likely that when you go to the next one it will also turn you down and in the end you find that they all turn you down. But if we have more banks in the country, you will find that one of those will be able to give you funding because in the end, funding it’s a competitive area.

So, the more funding institutions we have, the more we will be able to have financial capital that people can rely on and opt for to fund their businesses and move on. As regards an economic indaba - in the end there is nothing wrong in getting a number of key players in our economy to sit together in an economic indaba gathering where we will be able to exchange view and thoughts on the economic trajectory that our country should embark upon. But it should also be an economic indaba that will come up with solutions and not come up with complaints and lamentations. It should be one that focuses on the trajectory we should embark on, going forward. Many people keep saying that they are sick and tired of talk shops, and indeed, to a large extent they are absolutely correct. This is now the time for action; this is now the time to embark on implementation so that we can implement what should take this country forward.

So, whilst one broadly accepts it, we should not revert back to having endless talk shops and lamentations. We should be action oriented, and that is why I responded to the earlier question as I did. I said we should come up with solutions and we should no longer have fears; no longer have doubts and no longer have problems and impediments. Let us all realise that we have a challenge and as we face a challenge - as much as we may be coming from different viewpoints from the left; different viewpoints from a conservative angle; different viewpoints from the people from middle of the road – we must all come forward with ideas that will take the country forward. My view is that it should all be premised on putting practical solutions on the table rather than lamentations and impediments on the table. It would be on that basis that I would be supportive of the hon Holomisa’s idea. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr M GUNGUBELE: Thank you Mr President for addressing Parliament through answering a number of these questions. It appears that whenever the FF Plus talks about eliminating the colonial legacy, it provokes fear in them that they would be excluded. Is it not the time now to demonstrate that in our destination is a nation there is no mutually exclusivity between that and correcting the iniquities of the past. Secondly, in terms of correcting the

issues of the land, our fiscal framework is the compass. Can the President address the country on that? Thank you very much.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: The issue of inclusivity should never be seen as being a racially loaded construct. The inclusivity that we speak about is premised on nonracialism – on including all the people of South Africa. This is where our Freedom Charter was absolutely correct in saying that South Africa belongs to all who live in it. Our past rulers, or the misrulers of this country, thought that South Africa belonged to just a few and we say that South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

Therefore, what we seek to do as we correct the imbalances of the past - including the ownership and control of the economy and including the ownership of land and everything - is to do it on an inclusive basis by saying that we should all work together to address this problem that we now have at hand. And what is the problem that we need to work together on? Up until today, 72% of farm land and agricultural holdings belongs to white people. What I would ask is that a correct situation should have a much more inclusive type of situation where we do what the Freedom Charter says, that the land shall be shared amongst all who work it. And this is what we want to see. What the hon Gungubele is seeking to say is that it is all about black and white people. It does not

exclude the white people in our country. We seek inclusiveness, and that is why I am saying that we should all come forward on the basis of inclusiveness.

We should not be propagating fear amongst any section of the South African society. [Interjections.] We want to say that all of us as South Africans have a share in this country. Let us work together to ensure that we all share in the wealth of our country. In the past it was not done. So, let us come forward with solutions. What I welcome, hon Groenewald, is those entities, those companies, those individuals who can come forward and say we have these opportunities to train and advance the people of our country - those who can say that they have these opportunities - land holdings to share and they want to bring it forward so that we can all share and grow together. We welcome those who see certain assets of our country being underutilised and say they have the skills and the knowledge, and would like those to be mutually shared. So it is mutual inclusivity rather than exclusivity that we need to focus on.

Of course, as the hon Gungubele said that much of what needs to happen in the end has to be based on the size of the cloth we have

– the size of the cloth we have from a fiscal point of view. There are a number of opportunities that we can embark upon. I have been

immensely touched by a number of companies that have come forward and said that they have land holdings that they don’t use and they want these land holdings to be apportioned to black people. They are prepared to assist and even give infrastructure so that these land holdings can be utilised. That is something that should be welcomed.

I would like us to see us all working towards that goal of inclusivity rather than exclusivity, and of moving forward together as South Africans in regards to everything. If we could do that, then South Africa will be a great country. The greatness of South Africa was held back by past policies. It is about time that South Africa becomes a great country and utilises all the people and assets to have inclusive growth for all South Africans.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Can I stand on a point of order, hon Spekaer.

The SPEAKER: Hon President, are you done with your response

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Yes, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Hon Shivambu, what is your point of order?

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: The point of order is that the President keeps on saying that we are pushing for white people to donate land to black people. Have we moved away from expropriation of land without compensation?

Ms J TSHABALALA: You are out of order yourself. Order!

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Because every time he says that he is looking for white people to donate land.

Ms J TSHABALALA: The President never said that, you are out of order.

The SPEAKER: Hon Tshabalala ...

Ms J TSHABALALA: You are out of order, the President never said that.

The SPEAKER: Hon Tshabalala!

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Because every time he speaks he says that we are looking for white people to come forward and that businesses are donating land.

The SPEAKER: Hon Shivambu?

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: ... [Inaudible.] ... benefiting from land now?

The SPEAKER: Hon Shivambu.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: ... as mandated by Parliament.

The SPEAKER: No, hon Shivambu. [Interjections.] Hon Shivambu, you know that you are a chance because you heard what the President said. He started off with the need for us to revise that ad hoc committee. Hon President, your last supplementary question for the day comes from the Leader of the Opposition and he is in the Chamber. Hon Steenhuisen?

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, I think it is a real shame Mr President that you referred to the theft of food parcels as a misdemeanour. A misdemeanour is a parking offence; stealing food meant for the poor is plain corruption. It is very clear from your responses today that ...

The SPEAKER: Hon Steenhuisen, may I just interrupt you. Are you on the last supplementary of the question put to the President by the hon Groenewald?

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: I am indeed, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I don’t think it had anything to do with food

parcels.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: It is very clear to us that ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Please proceed with your supplementary on the last question, sir.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: It is very clear from the President’s response that he will not walk away from the job killing policies and he is determined to double down on the very policies that has pushed 10 million people into the unemployment queue and that has kept people locked in poverty and kept out of opportunity in the country. We wanted a progressive suggestion. Here is one for you Mr President, turn your back on bailing out the SA Airways, SAA, with R33 billion and put that money directly into funds and ... [Interjections.] ... that are going to be able to assist South Africans to ... [Inaudible.] [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Ndlozi let him finish, I will give you the opportunity. [Interjections.] Hon Steenhuisen, continue with your

supplementary. [Interjections.] Hon Steenhuisen, finish your supplementary. [Interjections.] Hon Ndlozi, I will come back to you.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Surely the President would agree that a progressive agenda will be to scrap the to R33 billion set for SAA’s bailout and redirect that money to areas of the economy that will really create jobs and stimulate growth and development and leave people to get job opportunities.

The SPEAKER: Hon Ndlozi, you said you have a point of order. Hon Ndlozi? Okay, I pass.

Dr P J GROENEWALD: Hon Speaker, if Ndlozi doesn’t want to take his point of order, can I just stand on a point of clarity before the President answers. The hon President said that we must come forward and he specifically referred to proposals ... [Interjections.]

Ms J TSHABALALA: ... it is clarity.

The SPEAKER: Hon Tshabalala, I am still chairing this meeting.

Dr P J GROENEWALD: Can I just ask if the hon President may respond. I understood him correctly because I am willing, and I will give him a comprehensive proposal for an inclusive economy for both South Africa ... If I understood him correctly, then he will accept that. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: You understood him to have said that he wants people to bring proposals ... but President, you can respond.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, I am able to say very quickly that I would welcome proposals from the hon Groenewald, and I am serious in making this assertion, hon Groenewald. I am not politicking; I am not playing to the gallery. I truly believe that the time has come – particularly at this moment when we now need to move our country out of this Covid-19 hole to see how we can reset and restructure our economy moving forward so that we can have inclusive growth where those who are currently feeling disheartened are able to be involved in the economy of their own country. So, I am serious and we got to address the situation of land. I like to hear views from that as well where the majority of black people still do not land. I want to hear what proposals you have. To the hon Shivambu, I have said very clearly that the committee that is dealing with the issue of section 25 of our Constitution – expropriation of land without compensation must be

reappointed and finish its work. That is a very clear position that that committee must work on that because we do need to address the land question in our country without fail. But I am also saying that there are quite a number of South Africans who are coming forward with propositions that are changing lives; propositions where a number of options are being put on the table. Now, we need to look at the multiplicity of proposals that are on the table, including the one that the parliamentary committee has to finalise. Coming to the hon Steenhuisen, the proposal that comes from business rescue on SAA is on the table for discussion and I have even looked at it closely but it is going to be discussed. The whole process is going to unfold and already, hon Steenhuisen, the government is on the hook for a good R16 billion because it has guaranteed over a number of years – it is not last year, it is not the year before. The business rescue process has come to the conclusion that those guarantees have to be honoured. Already, that liability has to be met in one form or shape. We will be looking at that proposal to see how best that can all be addressed in a way that we will be able to take this country forward. All what we will be doing, hon Steenhuisen, is not to drive South Africa into a hole, but it is to make sure that we continue an inclusive economy, going forward. It is possible that you may not agree with some of the things that are on the table, and it is possible that the other political parties may not agree,

but we’ve got to move South Africa forward and it is to this end that the hon Holomisa’s suggestion ...[Inaudible.] ... so long as the people will come forward with proposals. So, I want to end by saying that this is the moment when those who have ideas or proposals should come forward with proposals. This is the moment when South Africa is yearning for those proposals so that we can move our country forward out of the Covid-19. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The House adjourned at 17:26.