**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

# WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2020

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES***

The Council met at 14:03. The Chairperson took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

NOTICES OF MOTION (ZOOM PROBLEMS & INTERRUPTIONS 14:05 TO 14:08.

# NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr A B CLOETE: Deputy Chairperson, I hereby give notice that on the next sitting day of the House I shall move on behalf of the FF Plus:

That the House-

1. notes that, considering that some politicians have called for or ordered for ... [Inaudible.] ... is

evident now ... [Inaudible.] ... in our country, bearing in mind that anyone that wishes to kill someone or any living being by fire is inflicting the most hellish, wicket and diabolical pain possible and reveals the worse ... [Inaudible.]

... character humanity can offer, taking into account the vicious torching of a herd boy from Lesotho by 10 men on Saturday night,

1. also considering that the farmer from Koffiefontein in the Free State was also attacked and set alight by two attackers ... [Inaudible.]

... in the western Free State where residents torched a water tank to protest, and as a result, thousands of hectares, if not tens of thousands were destroyed by ongoing, ... [Inaudible.] ... fires;

1. also noting with concern the brutal murder of Brandon Horner, a 21-year-old that was stabbed ... [Inaudible.] ... executed, the death of the 81- year-old, David Lesley of Harrismith in the Free

State last week, after he was attacked brutally on his farm; and

1. debates the decline in of the moral fibre in South Africa and how to extinguish the fire of hatred.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: I just want to

request the Table staff to please mute members if they exceed the time.

Mr A ARNOLDS: Deputy Chairperson, I hereby give notice that on the next sitting day of the House I shall move on behalf of the EFF:

That the House-

1. debates the basic income grant as part of a permanent solution to assist the country’s unemployed people.

# THABA CHWEU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AUDIT REPORT

(Draft Resolution)

Ms H S BOSHOFF: Hon Deputy Chair, I move without notice on behalf of the DA:

That the Council-

* 1. notes with concern that after two...[Inaudible]... inaction, the DA reiterates its call to the Council of the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality to release the audit forensic report that was conducted in 2018.
  2. further notes that the DA in Mpumalanga has fought tirelessly in the local municipality and in the provincial legislature to ensure that this report to be tabled and that those who are guilty of corruption be arrested.
  3. also notes that up until today, the forensic audit report that was conducted in Thaba Chewu Local Municipality remains hidden and there is no one who can verify if charges were pressed against all those that were implicated.
  4. again notes that the call by the President to act swiftly against any official who has been implicated against any alleged fraudulent activities has not been heeded by this municipality or the provincial government of Mpumalanga.
  5. in pursuing the fight against corruption, we call on this provincial government to ensure that this report be tabled on the Council and released to the public, and those guilty of corrupt practises be brought to justice. I so move. Thank you, hon Deputy Chair.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: The motion is in front the House. Is there any objection? [Interjections] There was an objection. I will speak at the end of the motions as to what is going to happen with this. Hon Zandamela and after you it will be hon Gillion.

# EVOKING SECTION 139 OF THE CONSTITUTION IN MUNICIPALITIES

(Draft Resolution)

Mr S ZANDAMELA: Hon Deputy Chair, I move without notice on behalf of the EFF to propose:

That the Council-

debates the ineffectiveness of provincial governments, evoking Sec 139 of the Constitution to municipalities when municipalities continue to collapse and degenerate despite these interventions. I so move, Deputy Chair.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: The motion is in front of the House. Is there any objection? There is an objection.

Hon MEMBER: Corrupt people are calling for objections all the time.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: We will move to the next member; it will be hon Gillion. Chairperson are you ready to take over?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Yes ... [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: After hon Gillion spoke you can take over. Hon Gillion.

# THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

(Draft Resolution)

Ms M N GILLION: Hon Deputy Chair, I move without notice:

That this Council-

* + 1. notes with pride the reported preparedness of the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC to conduct the coming local government by- elections in November 2020.
    2. that this preparedness is born out of rich experience of more than two decades of visionary and sterling leadership of this critical institution of our democracy.
    3. also notes the enthusiasm displayed by the different political parties which is marked by significant increase of parties that have registered, to contest these elections as part of the consolidation of our democracy.
    4. that the increase in the number of the political parties and their successful registration in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic is a great demonstration of professional efficiency of the IEC.
    5. therefore, calls upon this Council to congratulate the IEC and all political parties that have registered for the elections for their co-operation in strengthening our constitutional democracy.
    6. further calls on the political parties to assist the IEC by conscientising their supporters, to observe the level protocols of the national state of disaster pre and during the elections as part of pushing back the

resurgence of the spread of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. I so move.

Motion agreed to in accordance with section 65 of the Constitution.

# FIRES IN THE WESTERN FREE STATE

(Draft Resolution)

Mr W A S AUCAMP: Hon Deputy Chair, I move without notice on behalf of the DA:

That this Council-

1. notes the devastating fires that swept through the Western Free State on Tuesday, more than

100 000 hectares of land was destroyed, and thousands of animals had died or had to be put down by the SPCA.

1. notes that communities such as Hertzogville, Dealesville, Bultfontein and Hoopstad that were

affected rely on the agricultural sector to keep their economies going, without it there are no jobs, no food and no hope.

1. calls on the Minister of Agriculture to immediately intervene by supporting all those affected by the fires by declaring it a disaster area and granting disaster relief to the affected areas.
2. resolves to urge the South African Police Service to take decisive action in bringing all persons guilty of arson to account; and
3. welcomes the non-partisan request from the Portfolio Committee in the other House, chaired by the Hon. Mandela, to a similar effect that is in the National Assembly.
4. that in this time where we hear of more fires destroying farm and communal land across the country that such assistance be extended to

those affected elsewhere as well. I so move. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Aucamp are you there?

Mr W A S AUCAMP: I am here hon Chair. Did you hear my motion?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: I will ask the Deputy Chair to please carry on. We seem to have a problem.

Motion agreed to in accordance with section 65 of the Constitution.

# ARRESTS ON THE MEYIWA CASE

(Draft Resolution)

Ms M BARTLETT: Hon Deputy Chair, I move without notice on behalf of the ANC:

That the Council-

1. notes with pride the reported news of the arrest of suspects in the killing of South Africa’s soccer icon, the late Senzo Meyiwa, who was killed in cold blood a few years ago.
2. notes that the arrest and other high profile arrests of suspects in the violent crimes is one of the watershed breakthroughs that demonstrate the resilience and capacity of our criminal justice system to erode the space for violent crimes in our society.
3. therefore, calls upon the Council to congratulate the men and women in blue, and the Minister of Police in particular, for fulfilling their promise to the country that they will never rest until the suspects in this killing are brought to book. I so move. Thank you very much Deputy Chair.

Motion agreed to in accordance with section 65 of the Constitution.

# RECENT ARRESTS BY THE HAWKS

(Draft Resolution)

Ms S SHAIKH: Hon Deputy Chair, I move without notice on behalf of the ANC:

That the Council-

1. notes the recent arrests by the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA of high profile suspects in the alleged acts of corruption, fraud and money laundering.
2. further notes the pronouncements by the Hawks of imminent arrests of other suspects in what has become commonly known as the biggest bank heist of the former VBS Mutual Bank and other high profile arrests related to corruption.
3. also notes that these arrests should be seen as part of the collective resolve of the country to fight corruption without fear or favour.
4. calls on our people to be patient with the slow turning of the wheel of justice to allow our law enforcement agencies to work with due diligence, not only for arresting the suspects, but also securing their convictions and their graduation into the orange overalls.
5. salutes our law enforcement agencies for their sterling work in bringing to book those who have sought to benefit from the public purse through corrupt and fraudulent means.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: The motion is in front of the House. Is there any objection? If none, let’s move to the hon Moletsane. Hon Moletsane.

Mr M S MOLETSANE: Hon Deputy Chair, mine was a motion with notice.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Ok then, we will do the notice of motion on the next sitting.

Motion agreed to in accordance with section 65 of the Constitution.

# SCHOOL PUPIL DRIVING A BUS WHILE DRIVER DRINKING

(Draft Resolution)

Ms N NDONGENI: Hon Deputy Chair, I move without notice on behalf of the ANC:

That the Council-

1. notes that the Moshesh Agricultural High scholar transport operator was suspended shortly after a video of him, drinking while a pupil was driving the bus, went viral on social media;
2. further notes that in the video the operator can be seen dancing and sipping from the bottle while the pupil is driving the bus.
3. also notes that the lives of all the learners who were travelling in the bus were put in danger and this cannot be allowed to happen again; and
4. therefore, calls on the Eastern Cape Department of Education to make sure that the transport operator is punished accordingly and that this kind of incident never happens again. I so move. Thank you Deputy Chair.

Motion agreed to in accordance with section 65 of the Constitution.

# MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

(The late Achmat Dangor, Igshaan Dangor and Suliman Dangor)

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Thank you Deputy Chair. I move without notice on behalf of the ANC:

That the Council—

1. notes with profound sadness and grief the passing of Suliman Dangor, Achmat Dangor and Igshaan Dangor, who were the brothers of the provincial whip of the Gauteng province, hon M Dangor and the deputy secretary-general of the ANC, Comrade Jessie Duarte;
2. further notes that the Dangor brothers passed away in a space of just over a month due to COVID-19 related complications;
3. acknowledges the indelible role played by the Dangor-brothers in the fight against apartheid and for remaining among the founding pillars of various national efforts to rebuild South Africa after the 1994 democratic elections;
4. recognises that Suliman Dangor was a community activist who played a pivotal role in the fight against crime;
5. further recognises that Achmat Dangor formed Black Thoughts along with other writers to oppose

the enslavement of the Bantu education system, while he served in many nongovernmental organisations, including the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, and that some of the books he authored and published over the years include *Waiting for Leila, Private Voices* and *Z-Town Trilogy*, among many others;

1. also recognises that Igshaan Dangor was a political activist who joined the ranks of uMkhonto weSizwe, MK, and returned from exile in 1990 after the unbanning of the ANC, and immediately joined the ANC Riverlea branch in the Johannesburg region, assisting in strengthening and building ANC structures throughout Gauteng; and
2. takes this opportunity to convey its heartfelt condolences to hon Dangor and the entire Dangor family for their incalculable loss, and to express its profound appreciation to them for sharing their entire family with South Africa and

allowing them space to dedicate their time to serving South Africa.

Motion agreed to in accordance with section 65 of the Constitution.

Mr K MOTSAMAI: Thanks Deputy Chairperson. I hereby give notice that on the next sitting day of the House I shall move on behalf of the — emancipation — EFF:

That the Council—

1. notes that there are more than 10 000 students in institutions of higher learning that are currently ... [Inaudible.]
2. discuss the plan by the Ministry of higher learning to assist those poor students.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Ms S Lucas): I think

that is a notice of motion. We will deal with it in that way.

The motion without notice becomes a notice of motion.

# MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

(The late Mzwandile Webster Nyambi)

Ms D G MAHLANGU: Thank you, hon Deputy Chair. I move without notice on behalf of the ANC:

That the Council—

1. notes with profound sadness and grief the passing away of Mr Mzwandile Webster Nyambi who was the sixth child of the late Mr Joseph Nyambi and Ms Tryphina Nyambi, and the brother of our House Chairperson hon A J Nyambi;
2. further notes that Mr Mzwandile Nyambi was an accomplished and extremely decorated police officer who served the SA Police Service, the SAPS, with utmost dedication for 20 years;
3. acknowledges that he excelled in the fields of crime prevention and communication as a constable and moved on to serve as a sergeant, lieutenant, captain and ultimately, lieutenant colonel, and received numerous provincial and national awards for his commitment and tireless service to the SAPS; and
4. takes this opportunity — and as the ANC — to convey our heartfelt condolences to hon Nyambi, the Nyambi family and the Police Service for their loss.

Motion agreed to in accordance with section 65 of the Constitution.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Ms S Lucas): The

motions that have been objected to will become notices of motion. I will also advise the hon Motsamai that, at the next sitting, he puts his motion as a notice of motion.

We are moving to the next step as we have concluded with motions. If the Chairperson is not ready yet we will continue.

Mr S ZANDAMELA: Deputy Chairperson, my hand is up for motions without notice.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Ms S Lucas): Your

hand was never up and you did not indicate. So, the time has expired.

Mr S ZANDAMELA: [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Ms S Lucas): There

are only 20 minutes for both notices of motion and motions without notice. The time has expired and we are now moving on to the next point on the agenda.

Hon delegates, we will now proceed to the First Order of the day which is the Consideration of the Social Assistance Amendment Bill and the report of the Select Committee on Health and Social Services thereon. I will now call on the hon Maurencia Gillion, chairperson of the Select Committee on Health and Social Services to present the committee’s report. Hon Gillion?

# CONSIDERARTION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AMENDMENT BILL AND REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES THEREON

Ms M N GILLION: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon members and fellow South Africans, as we are gathered here today on this virtual platform in the time of unprecedented, adversity in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic I stand firm and thanks to the Constitution that sets out minimum standards pertaining to social economic rights, including social security, social persistence and social services.

Section 28(1) of the Constitution provides that every child has the right to family care or parental care or to appreciate alternative care when remote from the family environment and to basic nutrition, shelter basic health care services and social services.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, it is then indeed an honour to stand in front of this august House today and present the Social Assistance Amendment Bill B 8B – 2018 National Assembly – section 76 as finalised by the Select

Committee on Health and Social Services on 14 October 2020.

Hon members, the goal of the foster care system is to provide for the care health safety and wellbeing of children and adolescents while fostering reunification or an alternative permanent arrangement. However, as times evolve it has been facing administrative and legislative challenges which this legislation aims to address.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, this is an important piece of legislation as it amends the Social Assistance Bill 13 of 2004, by empowering the Minister of Social Development with concurrence of the Minister of Finance to make additional amounts available for social grants.

Thus through this Amendment Bill there will be provision for additional payments linked to social grants. Further there are provisions for the payment through a child responsible for a child headed household. Social relief of distress in the event of the disaster streamlining and improving the process of appeals against decisions of the

SA Social Security Agency by providing for an independent tribunal.

The Select Committee on Health and Social Services considered and deliberated on the negotiating mandates from provinces on 7 October 2020 following public participation on the Amendment Bill. Extensive legislature process undertaken has led to the finalisation of this Amendment Bill with no amendments as all nine provinces voted in favour.

It is then on this backdrop Deputy Chair, that we have the report tabled in front of you. The social services sector needs this Bill to be ascended as a big step towards addressing challenges in the foster care system I thank you, Deputy Chairperson.

*Declaration of Vote*:

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Hon Deputy Chairperson, the foster care crisis came to our attention in 2011 when for the first time the Minster and the Department of Social Development were taken to court by the Centre for Child Law on behalf of no less than 120 000 foster care child grants that had

lapsed and stopped being paid. A further 300 000 grants that were at risk of lapsing, since then the North Gauteng High Court for the sake of children who were on the foster care system has had to keep holding that the children’s expired foster care court orders must believe to have been extended and their grants must be continued to be paid.

At the centre of all this has been the requirement for the Minister and the Department of Social Development to develop a comprehensive legal solution to deal with the foster care crisis. That comprehensive legal solution has not been forthcoming in almost 10 years and as a result the North Gauteng High Court has had to extend the 2011 court order three times in 2014, 2017 and in 2019 respectively.

We hope the Social Assistance Amendment Bill which we support will bring about some relieve to the system and ensure that children who deserve this grant receive it and free the social workers and magistrates who have been bogged down by the backlogs to do the equally important and protected work through the child protection system.

The Bill empowers the Minister to provide a top up to child support grant for categories of children in need. This will enable a top up for relative scaring for orphaned children.

This is the first part of the comprehensive legal solution. Once this Bill is passed by the NCOP, we call on the department to act efficiently to finalise the regulations to enable the top up to be imposed before the law of the High Court order expires. Otherwise a fourth extension for this High Court order is going to be required. We also hope that the unfortunate legacy of the department having to be run by courts can be broken once and for all. Our social workers are a scarce resource which should be used strategically. We have no less than

4 000 of these social workers who were trained by government and are now sitting at home while the sectors need them so disparately. We again call on all the departments to absorb all the social workers to fight the COVID-19 and beyond. We hope that the Minister and the acting director-general will make decisions that are in the best interest of all the children in the country. Thank you.

Ms A D MALEKA: Thank you, Deputy Chairperson, the ANC rises in support of the Social Assistance Amendment Bill. The ANC wants to make the opportunity to congratulate Minister Lindiwe Zulu on her appointment as the Chairperson of the Partners in Population Development, PPD. The PPD has a sole mandate on promoting South co- operation in the field of reproductive health population and development.

We are delighted that the provinces through their final mandate support the Bill. Hon members, firstly, the Bill deals with the rolling out of the inspectorate which will function faster, timeously focus on investigation and manage incidents of fraud in South African Social Security Agency, Sassa.

Secondly, it provides a top up for children looked after by their family members and reduce the burden on the foster-care grant system, as well as the adoption system. It is the first comprehensive legal solution that addresses the backlog on the foster-care grant system.

The substantive amendment relates to the Minister of Social Development with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance, make available additional payments for social grants based on certain criteria. It removed reconsideration requirements from Sassa so that grant applicants can do directly to the Appeals Tribunal as it shortens the process.

Thirdly, it changes the inspectorate organisational structure from being a government department to a component. In part, the proposal amendment aimed to reduce the burden on social workers. It will enable them to perform the essential work of identifying children who are in need of support and care and putting them through the court system.

Through the new legislation, the department has to inform all stakeholders that they could appeal directly through them and not have to go through Sassa. This means that the department is expected to regularly and effectively communicate with stakeholders in order to close any gaps that may exist, and to ensure that people are aware of the appeals process and the changes that would come with

the Amendment Bill. We support the Amendment that seeks to ensure that the inspectorate functions independently.

Hon members, this amendment will ensure that the Social Assistance system caters the kingship care. We will create security for children that are raised by their own extended families. It will enable the country to advance the best interest of the child or children which is of paramount importance as enjoined by section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The ANC supports the Social Assistance Amendment Bill.

Ms G N SWARTBOOI-NTOMBELA (KWAZULU-NATAL DELEGATE): Thank

you, Chairperson, as KwaZulu-Natal, we are excited to support the Social Assistance Amendment Bill [B8-B 2018] as it seeks, firstly, to empower the Minister responsible for Social Development with concurrence with the Minister of Finance, to make additional amounts available for grants.

Secondly, to streamline and improve the process of internal appeals against the decisions of Sassa to be made to the independent tribunal. Thirdly, to constitute

the internal inspectorate for Social Assistance as a government component, instead of a government department as currently provided for in the Principal Act.

Having received the minutes of the select committee and the responses from the department, KwaZulu-Natal legislature noted that some of our comments were noted and there was an undertaking that there will be future technical amendments to the act or regulations formulated to accommodate the committee’s proposals.

As the committee, we could not ignore the fact that some of the proposals submitted were not addressed and some issues raised by the province were policy related, for example, the introduction of the grant of the widows. Hon Chairperson, we are mindful of a court judgement that compels Parliament to pass the Amendment Bill to give to effect to the CSG policy.

KwaZulu-Natal legislature has no option but to support the Bill in its current form with the understanding that there will be a further reform of the Social Assistance regime, which will address some of the issues raised by

the committee in its negotiating mandate. I thank you, hon Chairperson.

Debate concluded.

Declarations of votes made on behalf of the Western Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal.

Question put: That the Bill be adopted.

IN FAVOUR OF**:** Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu- Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West, Western Cape.

Bill accordingly adopted in accordance with section 65 of the Constitution.

# A TRIBUTE TO HEALTH CARE WORKERS

The CHAIRPERON OF THE NCOP: Deputy Chairperson, hon Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phahla, permanent and special delegates representatives of the South African Local Government Association, SALGA, ladies and

gentlemen, thank you all for joining me today to pay tribute to health workers in general but to our NCOP healthcare workers in particular.

In any disaster whether caused by humans, nature or both, one often find a group of people who occupy the frontline. At the heart of all frontline workers are doctors, nurses, paramedics and other health workers who selflessly serve their communities and more often with little access to resources and frequently at great personal risk.

They are usually the first port of call for any emergencies. They roll up their sleeves and, line up the face of disaster to save lives, to save limbs and property. They become our eyes and ears when many of us have retreated to places of relative safety. They work under the worst and difficult conditions, staring danger and death in the eye; like in the case of fire-fighters trying to quell raging fires.

Their proximity to danger is the best [guarantor](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALeKk01Av_7r_XlNsjg0HP-3ZxcXcla84A%3A1603981622279&q=guarantor&spell=1&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjIpsmWgdrsAhWRTxUIHVFPB9wQkeECKAB6BAgNECo&biw=1920&bih=951) that lives could be saved. In this process, their families

experience anxiety as they their kids and kin risks their lives to save the lives of fellow human being. In our institution frontline healthcare workers have provided quality healthcare for all of us under demanding conditions of the outbreak of covid-19.

When the outbreak of coronavirus was first identified at the end of 2019 and declared a public health emergency of international concern in January 2020 and thereafter, a pandemic in March this year by the World Health Organisation, WHO, little did we expect that it would wreck such havoc globally. We witnessed its spread within weeks every habitable continent in the globe. The numbers of people who have perished ever since the outbreak have now surpassed one million globally. With close to 19000 confirmed deaths in our country.

Among the dead are the healthcare workers who occupied the battle trenches in an act of philanthropism dedicated to saving lives. It is through their commitment and the contribution of these healthcare workers that President Cyril Ramaphosa was able to observe that and I quote:

As a country we were able to withstand the massive surge of infections in the middle of July 2020.

He said this when he addressed the Joint Sitting of Parliament on 15 October 2020. It is therefore fitting that the NCOP has dedicate time to pay tribute to all the healthcare workers for their role in the frontline of the fight against covid-19 pandemic.

The rapid spread of the virus occurred at a time when we had less knowledge about it and its spread. And all we had were thousands of healthcare workers who were prepared to charge into the epicentre of the storm in the midst of the unimaginable risk. They use whatever evidence that was available from medical science to serve as their shield. Even when more evidence emerged regarding the spread of the virus through airborne transmission in certain circumstances, they did not flinch. They continued to attend to the sick and impart lessons about the precautionary measures to wipe off the danger. They did all this in order to save the lives of fellow human beings.

All that stood between the health workers and the virus in the highly contagious environment they operated in were pieces of protective equipment yet they stood guard and gave us the assurance that the human spirit will triumph against all the odds. In spite of the lack of resources and funeral challenges, they kept on keeping on.

Chairperson, if there is one lesson we should learn from the sacrifices made by our healthcare workers it is that, as humans we possess amazing capacities to do good, and that – although we may not always truly appreciate it – we are indeed wired to love. As the former President of the democratic South Africa Mr Nelson Mandela observed in his book Long Walk to Freedom and said and I quote:

No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

The fight against covid-19 pandemic has shown us through the sacrifices of our healthcare workers that the frontline can be a place for the expression of love. It can be a place for the expression of that which “comes naturally to the human heart.”

The covid-19 pandemic has exposed what we have come to refer to as fort lines of inequality in South Africa. It has demonstrated the need to act with great speed to protect the most vulnerable in our society. It has confirmed the correctness of our belief that we should place the resources of the country where they are needed the most. Our promise of freedom knows no colour or bad status, it is for all South Africans.

The covid–19 experiences should therefore serve as a catalyst for the fostering of nation–building and social cohesion. As the healthcare workers have shown us we are indeed bound by human compassion towards one another. We should work together to achieve social cohesion and accelerate the project of nation–building in order to experience a just and inclusive society.

Ours is a nation that pride itself on embracing the great virtues and philosophy of Ubuntu-Botho. The practice of Ubuntu-Botho has seen us through times of great suffering and anguish. At the heart of the philosophy of ubuntu- botho is the acceptance that and I quote:

We achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others and caring for those around us.

We salute our healthcare workers who continue to be on the frontline of fighting the spread of covid-19 pandemic. We salute them for continuing to provide essential health services at great risk to their own health and to their lives. We honour those who have succumbed in the course of the fight. In their memory, we should commit to doing that which is good whatever the odds.

As I conclude, please allow me to say our hearts are with all the health workers and their families. We dare not forget what we have done and continue to do for your country at a time when your country needed you the most. May you continue to do the extra ordinary things you

committed yourself to for the love of this country and indeed for the love of humanity. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH: The hon Deputy Chair of the NCOP, hon Sylvia Lucas, hon Chairperson, Mr Amos Masondo, all the members, including the MECs from provinces, delegates and also the special delegates, good afternoon. We thank you very much, hon Chair and Deputy Chair, for the invitation to the Ministry of Health, to take part in this very important debate in the NCOP.

Let me start also by saying that, I am participating in this debate not only on my own behalf, but also on behalf of my colleague and comrade, Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize, the Department of Health and also on behalf of various players in the health sector. This is also very befitting, hon Deputy Chairperson, for me to take an opportunity to wish the Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize and his wife Dr Mme Mkhize, speedy recovery, so that the Minister can come back and continue with very important task that he has been doing since the outbreak of this pandemic, also on our shawls, with the first case being confirmed on 5 March 2020.

As Members of the House will attest, and as many in the country will also confirm that Minister Mkhize has indeed been leading the fight against this invisible enemy, leading from the front. I have kept a close contact with him since he called me to inform me of his positive test late on this last Sunday. I can say to report that both himself and his wife, Dr May, are in good spirits and they are doing very well.

We hope that they should be out of danger. In fact, they are out of danger, but they are recovering. So, we hope that they should come back to work very soon. Hon members, pandemics do not spare those who care for the sick, but by their very own nature they put us in a great risk of exposure of this infectious diseases. Healthcare workers are in proximity to those infected with it, and at a time, with them compared with the general public.

In this COVID-19 pandemic, protecting the healthcare workers is central to protecting our health system. All health frontline workers may be protected from the transmission. This in turn, will be a good protection for the public. Healthcare workers and emergency response

workers are the most at risk. Hundreds have already fallen ill to this pandemic, some of them very critically and some have even lost their lives.

By 21 October, which is yesterday, there were more than 708 000 confirmed cases for COVID-19 out of over

4,5 million tests which have been conducted. These numbers give just a glimpse of additional workload that was placed on our frontline health workers. The total number of deaths have passed almost 18 500, with a case fatality rate of 2.6%, which is very close to the other countries like the US and Brazil, and much lower than countries like the United Kingdom.

Harmony to the care and commitment of health frontline workers, who provided their best to save lives, and often their time to save the population, healthcare workers are at the frontline in this fight, by putting themselves in tremendous pressure to perform at their best in efforts to prevent unnecessary fatalities. Amidst the stressful conditions they work under, healthcare workers make sure that their skills are always sharp, they remain focus on

their patients and they are alert and focused while providing this caring service.

Medical staff of COVID-19 patients, also face mental stress, physical exhaustion separation from family, stigma, pain of losing patients and also of looking sometimes at colleagues who gets infected. Many of them as I have mentioned, have also contracted the virus, and many unfortunately, have also succumbed to this virus. In South Africa, more than 44 000 health care workers in the public and private sectors combined, have been infected with COVID-19 by the middle of this month, October.

This includes clinical as well as the support staff. Regrettably, 380 of these health workers have succumbed to this infection. May their Souls Rest in Peace. Hon Chairperson and members, please also allow me this opportunity to wish all the health workers who have contracted the COVID-19, speedy recovery and also wish their families from whom they’ve been separated, strength and courage. Let us reiterate that COVID-19 pandemic puts healthcare workers in a very difficult situation.

There’s a risk not only to themselves, but also of bringing this infection to their families when they go home. Keeping the balance between their own needs of physical and mental health, and the need of patients, put a lot of stress to them on daily basis. Furthermore, in some cases, they have been put under pressure, when resources are scarce and in the scarce resources, they have to decide who must they afford this, and not the other one. These are very difficult decisions.

Fortunately, in our country, our health services were never completely overwhelmed.

I know that some opportunists from time to time also want to blame us or having over provided from the fact that we have provided additional facilities, some of which were never 100% utilised. But we know that if we have not provided so, and if the pandemic had been at a harsher way, again we would have been criticised. So, we are happy that we overprovided and we never reached a serious stage where our health workers had to choose, who to care for and who to can admit.

There were always beds in both public and private hospitals. The World Health organisation, WHO, defines health as the state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, not just the absence of diseases and infirmity. Therefore, in order to take care of the health workers as a complete human being, a package of care including physical, psychological and social support was provided as a package.

The strategy for taking care of the health workers was officially launched by Minister Mkhize on the World Patient Day on 17 September 2020. This strategy aims to protect physical and mental health of our frontline workers by providing a package of care for all of them, encompassing physical, psychological and social support. The objectives of the strategy are to protect physical health of health workers through prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 infections by providing the following:

A safe physical environment, promote mental health of the health workers through psychological and social support, educate and train workers to manage COVID-19 cases and

implement occupational health and safety protocols, maintain and establish ongoing communication with all health workers. These are key infection control aspects to the implementation of this protection of health workers.

This includes, patient placement, sufficient ventilation and facilities, hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, wearing appropriate personal protection clothing according to the task performed, functional occupational health and safety committees play a very critical role to monitor the safety of health workers through medical surveillance, risk assessment of health workers and workplace risk mitigation.

Our vulnerable employees in the context of COVID-19 pandemic are identified and assessed according to guidelines which also call for optimal medical management. The protection and management includes also, reduction of the risk of exposure and temporary alternative work and arrangements or redeployment. Hon members, these are the measures some of which we have taken collectively, with the ministry and the department

together with the trade unions and the worker representatives.

So, we are very pleased that, with all these interventions, a lot of our health worker’s lives have been saved and at this stage we can say that, while we regret the fact that we did indeed lose some of our health workers, many of whom are still with us and they are still providing excellent service, and in the case we have a resurgence, we can say that our population will still be very much protected. Now, we have said a lot of lessons in the process, from national to provinces, learning from each other.

The CHAIPERSON OF THE NCOP: Conclude, Deputy Minister.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH: As I conclude, hon Chair, I want to salute our frontline health care workers who continue to serve and provide safe health care to patients in prevention of COVID-19 and many other disease burden which is still bedevilling our population. Let us keep our health workers in our thoughts and prayers all the time. Lastly, let me remind all the South Africans

that the virus is still with us, it’s not gone. Let’s continue to observe all the prevention protocols so that we can be able to save lives and save livelihoods. I thank you, hon Chairperson.

Mr M R BARA: Thank you, hon Chairperson. Chairperson, Deputy Minister and hon members, I think that it is important to know that coronavirus has caused a lot of despair among South Africans and the world at large. Some have lost their lives, and amongst those who lost their lives are health care workers who cared for the sick.

These heroes and heroines lost their lives whilst in the line of duty. They provided support and comfort to those in hospitals isolated from their families. The pressure under which they carry on their duties is highly commendable. They leave their homes, families and loved ones to give care and support for others every day in clinics, hospitals and other health institutions without fail. These include medical care administrative support and other services like cleaning and catering.

These are the individuals who are risking their lives so ours can be better. We must honour and uphold them for

they have put their lives on the line for us to live. That is why it is important for them to get the protective equipment and all they need to continue doing the good work that they are doing.

We have successfully exited the storm, and that is because of the countless efforts of those who put their lives on the line for the survival of others. They, therefore, need our support and maximum understanding as they stand up to help us. As some contract the virus, we are with them and their families. We are, however, aware of those who saw that this is an opportunity to make money for themselves whilst others were putting their lives on the line to save South Africa from a catastrophic situation. We want to implore the government to take this up as a matter of urgency to deal with those who saw these as an opportunity to enrich themselves.

We must commend provincial governments who have gone out of their ways to provide support to staff members in the health department to ensure that they are ready to provide services to those who need it. It is important that we must take note of the uptick of new infections.

There’s a new rise and re-emergence of the coronavirus. We, therefore, need to work closely with health care workers to defeat this pandemic. We are currently stand at 90% recovery rate which is quite phenomenon. This is all due to the hard work of our health care workers who are with us all the way.

We must continue to use all protective equipment that is provided to us. Numbers have significantly dropped compared to what they were three months ago. Therefore, that should serve as a motivation assisting those who put their lives on the line for us to survive the deadly coronavirus. The battle is not won yet, there are still fears that we might be back to where we were during the first outbreak of the coronavirus.

However, we stand to salute the impersonal contribution of those who put their lives on the line for the good of others. Just to say that Minister Mkhize stated that the country has seen 10% increase of cases over the last 14 days. While this is far from the 20% increase, it is important to remain assured of each province’s readiness to deal with a spike in cases. It’s quite refreshing that

we have such good South Africans amongst us and individuals who put the interests of the wellbeing of others even if it means that their own lives are at risk. We are fortunate to have such people amongst us that is mainly to serve and be there for the good of others. May all the health workers, the Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize, and his wife pull through and continue to fight against this deadly virus. We need to work hard to safeguard the health of our frontline workers. God bless South Africa. Thank you, Chairperson.

Ms M O MOKAUSE: Chair, the beginning of 2020 saw a war being waged against South Africa and the world, at large, that we could never have been prepared for. When the battle lines were drawn and the enemy was ready to attack, our battalion in surgical masks, scrubs, uniform, white or maroon, took to the frontline with fearful, yet brave hearts, to confront an adversary many knew very little about.

The novel coronavirus came like a thief in the night, sounding no alarm bells, wreaking havoc in its way and

leaving many heartbroken, physically exhausted, reeling from its effort.

It is the brave men and women who put their lives on the line for the whole nation, confronting this virus head-on every single day, whom we want to honour and pay tribute to, as an organisation, the EFF.

To health care workers in South Africa, we have observed for many years, even before the onset of the corona virus, how you have been subjected to precarious working conditions and yet you soldiered on fearlessly. We acknowledge the miracles that you have had to perform, saving lives with no medical equipment, treating patients with a shortage of medicines and keeping babies alive in neonatal ICUs, amidst power outages.

As the EFF, we are humbled. Despite a lot of uncertainty, you put your lives on the line, as health care workers and frontline workers. At a risk, you treated South Africans who were infected with the corona virus, whilst facing shortages of ventilators, life-saving PPEs, irrespective of the money that poured into the fund and

those corrupt people who used the money for themselves and their families.

When hospitals were overcrowded at the height of the corona virus, these frontline health care workers were there fighting the virus fearlessly.

When health care facilities were short-staffed because your colleagues were home sick, infected with the virus, these health care workers were there. They never complained and never stayed home.

When the health care system was on the brink of collapse, these health care workers were there, working 48-hour shifts, while fighting physical, mental and emotional fatigue. We as ordinary South Africans could never fully grasp the true extent to which the corona virus has affected your families as well as your psychological wellbeing.

Our duty is to thank you and honour you and say rest assured, you are on the right side of history. You will never be forgotten. You fought tirelessly to educate,

flatten the curve, safe the lives of thousands of ordinary South Africans, some of whom could not even afford health care, whilst others saw an opportunity to line their pockets and flatten their bank accounts.

Please, accept our condolences for those who lost their loved ones and those who lost colleagues who fought bravely through the covid-19 pandemic. May you continue to serve the nation with pride, humility and dignity. The EFF salutes you. Thank you.

Mr S E MFAYELA: Chair, the IFP would like to pay a special tribute to the health care workers that have remained at the forefront of our national response to the novel coronavirus.

It takes a certain level of courage, skills, traits and compassion to put their lives on the line every single day in an effort to heal our nation. Despite facing mental stress, physical exhaustion and separation from their own families, they are still committed to getting up every morning to selflessly serve our country and its people.

There is no better time than now for South Africa to nurture its spirit of Ubuntu, to lead with compassion, selflessness and humanity

Our health care workers have done exactly that. They have led by example and demonstrated what it means to selflessly serve our country and our people. Their efforts do not go unnoticed and we as the IFP thank and support them in every way.

In the same token, the issue of the covid-19 corruption is a shame and not reflective of the kind of leadership that South Africa deserves. South Africa needs leadership that comes from a place of selflessness, a place of compassion, a place of regard for one another and subsequently, a place of ubuntu. We need the leadership which has been demonstrated by our health care workers.

Going forward, the IFP hopes to see this kind of leadership take form in our country. I thank you.

Mr A B CLOETE: Chairperson, as is the case with many days where we celebrate or pay tribute to those we hold dear,

a debate such as this means nothing if we don’t do it every day. It is sad that it took covid-19 to make us realise the importance of health care workers today, but thank you for every health care worker for being in the frontline, because without you, any attempt to curb the spread would have been worth nothing.

For those who, amidst poor conditions in hospitals, have arrived at work, thank you. Thank you for pitching up and doing your job. Thank you to those who tried to be creative, to look for solutions to problems such as a lack of beds, blankets, oxygen and medicine, even though government did not attend to your pleas in the past.

Thank you to those who kept on going despite the fact that certain people with more political power than you wish to enrich themselves. Thank you to each and every doctor and nurse who face the virus in the very frontline, sometimes with very little assistance, while the department has underspent R21,7 million on salaries and personnel, this year. Thank you to those doctors who have lost an income owing to lockdown regulations and for staying true to ... [Inaudible.] ... the volunteered to

help where possible. Thank you for treating not only patients, infections, and symptoms, but for treating us as human beings.

Our prayers are also with those families of healthcare workers who lost loved ones during this pandemic.

*Afrikaans*:

Ons dank u, want ’n mens steek nie ’n lamp op en steek dit onder ’n emmer weg nie, maar sit dit op ’n lampstaander en dit gee lig vir almal in die huis. Julle is die lig vir die wêreld. Dankie.

Ms M N GILLION: Hon Chairperson, Deputy Minister, hon members, fellow South Africans, it is often said that modern day heroes and heroines do not wear capes. Indeed, the novel coronavirus pandemic that plagued the globe this year was a display to all of us under the reality of the statement.

While nations were grappling with the daily increases in positive cases and subsequent deaths brought about by this pandemic, which led to most countries undertaking a

lockdown, it was indeed our frontline health care workers who braved it out on the battlefield, in an effort to fight this pandemic.

It is no secret that health care workers had been on the forefront of fighting this pandemic, working long hours to provide care and support to those infected, in addition to their usual expected health care services.

It is thanks to their selfless dedication that 641 706 people have recovered fully from covid-19 to date. Health care workers willingly continue to risk their own health and that of their families so that the lives of millions of South Africans might be spared.

As the ANC, we wish to take this opportunity to show our sincerest appreciation and gratitude to these modern day heroes and heroines and encourage them to continue waging a relentless war against this pandemic. We also remember and commemorate the lives of all our frontline health care workers who sadly passed on from this virus. May your patriotic souls rest in eternal peace.

The outbreak of the coronavirus in our country has proven beyond reasonable doubt that our health care system, especially in the rural areas and townships needs the services of these workers, as they were at the forefront of mass screening and testing, treating and many other programmes that took place since the outbreak of covid-19 in this country.

In echoing the sentiments of Minister Zweli Mkhize yesterday, we are wishing him, alongside his wife, a steadfast recovery and I quote:

In a war, when an injured soldier lies down to recover, injuries do not remove his mind set from the set goal to win the battle. He uses such an opportunity to reflect on the battle and also to think ahead for when rejoins the army.

Like soldiers in this pandemic, the nation finds itself in that position where we are left with no choice but to continue to fight the battle against covid-19.

It is worth stating that, when government emphasised that a risk of a resurgence remains high, they did not do so to instil fear. As government, they have the responsibility to alert us when they see concerning trends. South Africans will recall that a few months ago when we witnessed these trends, it was not long before we started experiencing a burden in our health system.

We have a responsibility, as deployees, to ensure that important messages by government reaches our constituencies. The Minister of Health informed us yesterday that the reports are showing that in the country over the last seven days, there has been an increase of 9,1% in new cases. Similarly, over the 14 days, there has been an increase of 10,7%.

We wish to encourage all provinces to pay attention to these increasing numbers and quickly mount a response, including contact tracing and quarantine.

A study conducted by the UN, published in August this year, found that, at the household level, female-headed households were more likely to fall into poverty than

male-headed households during this pandemic, despite government’s efforts and interventions, which must be commendable.

The stimulus package, as we have seen to be rolled out in recent months could not be sufficient, given that households were still going to lose at least 40% of their income, even if they qualify for the special temporary employer relief scheme and other programmes that government put in place to cushion the poor and most vulnerable during this pandemic. It is for this reason that the ANC wishes to express its support for the President’s recently announced economic reconstruction and recovery plan. We are confident that this plan will usher the extraordinary measures it must take to restore our economy to inclusive growth, following the devastation caused by covid-19 to our people’s lives and our country’s economy.

In conclusion, I wish to echo the sentiments of the Minister of Health and as we continue to monitor the developments of the vaccine and the country’s economic reconstruction and recovery plan. The only weapon we

possess as a country is our social behaviour and constant adherence to health protocols. This entails the continuous practice of physical distance, wearing of masks when in public and washing our hands and/or the use of sanitizers on a regular basis. All of us must take the responsibility and always encourage those around us to follow suit.

It is the collective responsibility of all of us that will result in a victory against this pandemic. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon delegates, through our own individual observations, we know that at times, great efforts are not acknowledged during one’s lifetime.

Today, we gather to salute the patriots and to acknowledge the great work they have done.

# FAREWELL STATEMENTS AND TRIBUTE TO AUDITOR-GENERAL T MAKWETU FOR HIS TIRELESS SERVICE TO SOUTH AFRICA

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Ms S E Lucas): Thank

you very much hon Chairperson of the NCOP, House

Chairpersons, Chief Whip of the NCOP, hon members, permanent and special delegates, the Auditor-General, AG, Mr Makwetu ... [Inaudible.] It is indeed an honour and I want to express my gratitude to the NCOP and the Chairperson for this opportunity to be part of those who pay tribute to someone whom I’ve been working with for the past seven years ever since his inception as the AG.

... [Inaudible] I want to start by quoting the following, “Each epoch in history needs its own leaders as well as its own institutions to promote appropriate cultural shifts to meet new demands”.

Accountability is the very essence of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. In this regard, the AG of South Africa, as the supreme audit institution of the Republic, plays a very important oversight role of promoting financial accountability in government. While the introduction of the Auditor-General’s Act in 1989 and, more particularly, the amendment of that Act in 1992 increased the AG’s level of authority as well as its independence, it was really the impact of the new public management school of thinking across the public sector

... [Inaudible.] ... which both directly and indirectly led to the wide-reaching reforms undertaken by many supreme audit institutions ... [Inaudible.] To this end, the Office of the AG in South Africa has become a leading proponent of these reforms. Thereafter, the modernisation and reforms began in earnest through the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 and the Municipal Finance Management Act of 2005. These Acts, through a number of significant coalitions, gave birth to a revolution within the South African public sector and as a direct consequence within the Office of the AG. The positive impact is still being felt up until today.

Amartya Sen argues that the rulers of a nation are often insulated in their own lives from the misery faced by the common people. They can live through a national calamity without necessarily sharing the fate of the victims. If, however, they face public criticism, they might have a strong sense of insensitivity to take action or deal with the problems of the poor and the vulnerable.

Mr AG, in 2016 through your efforts and passion for the people of our country, you managed to persuade the

Standing Committee on Auditor-General in Parliament to review the powers of the AG and the suitability thereof to adequately address systemic failures in public-sector financial and performance management systems. The sole purpose of that legislation is to restore the administrative integrity of financial and performance management systems which are aimed at service delivery and the achievement of government’s strategic goals.

Mr Makwetu, through your leadership in office, you understood that Chapter 9 institutions are supposed to keep the executive under constant scrutiny, and to protect ordinary citizens from arbitrary action and state neglect.

Allow me and allow us as the NCOP to congratulate you and your supportive collective on enhancing your office’s mandate by successfully executing your office’s long-term strategy of delivering value to stakeholders through the facilitation of transparency and enabling accountability in the public sector.

As the National Council of Provinces, we would like to humbly acknowledge your ability to involve all relevant stakeholders throughout the trajectory ... [Inaudible.]

... and employing every effort to learn from them. Your conduct was never adversarial but rather exuded the necessary firmness in your leadership posture by fervently impressing upon Parliament and all the relevant stakeholders the need to work cohesively to implement solutions. This is indeed a true testament to the fact that the Office of the AG was run by a very transformative leader whose visionary leadership sought to advance an adherence to good governance practices.

The value system that you have successfully inculcated was one of respect, self-discipline, integrity and a commitment to serve. Indeed, your audit work was always based on areas that had the highest impact on the wellbeing of our people. As a result of your visionary leadership, your organisation currently boasts

1 227 audit professionals, almost twice as many as

10 years ago. These successes are as a result of your sustained ... [Inaudible.] ... and dedication over the past seven years.

Mr Kimi Makwetu ... [Inaudible.] ... allow me to bid you farewell. You have invariably been a model of courage and

... [Inaudible.] The impact of your work leaves an indelible mark and has set the aegis **...** [Inaudible.] ... on a clear trajectory of advanced transformation and good governance practices in South Africa. With leaders like your good self, our ... [Inaudible.] ... can never be lost.

In conclusion, to the incoming leadership of the institution, bear in mind that Chapter 9 institutions have a very important mandate. Their role is particularly significant now because the constitutional democracy in South Africa faces a number of specific inter-related challenges. If Chapter 9 institutions are to fulfil their collective mandate and live up to the title of institutions supporting constitutional democracy, they must ... {Inaudible.] ... for participation in public life outside ... [Inaudible.] They must ensure ... [Inaudible.] ... sponsor an accountable government by fostering an environment of tolerance and trust as essential ingredients of a constitutional democracy as envisaged by the Constitution. Chapter 9 institutions are

expected to contribute towards the entrenchment of these values by what they do and how they perform their functions. In short, we need Chapter 9 institutions, independent ... [Inaudible.] ... the work of government and relentlessly pursuing transformation.

I know that you will continue to serve South Africa with distinction wherever your next adventure leads you, but thank you for enabling us as Parliament to continue to pursue an outcomes-based relationship with the Office of the AG. You have been the third incumbent in the Office of the AG whom I have worked with, but I must mention Mr Makwetu, that it is very rare that we find people as humble as you are; as dedicated as you are; and someone who wants to see change and who wants to ensure that the stakeholders that you work with ... there is a lot of respect; there is a lot of common understanding; and ... there is a way that we can work with one another without undermining the course, the mission and the vision of whoever you are working with. With that, I want to pay tribute to you and I want to say to you, hamba kahle ... [Inaudible.] ... I wish you all the best. Thank you very much.

Mr W A S AUCAMP: Hon Chairperson, hon members of this House, the Auditor-General Makwetu, it is really a privilege for me to say farewell today to a very remarkable man. Hon Chairperson, when a Chapter 9 institution finds itself a leader of distinction, it is always a pity when their term ends. The country was for example, saddened when Adv Thuli Madonsela left the Public Protector’s office and so it is with our Auditor- General Mr Kimmy Makwetu.

It seems that Mr Makwetu is just at the peak of his game. He had become a household name in South Africa, the man is highly regarded for excellence, for his pursuit of good governance and for his proactive approach. We are saying goodbye and thanking a person who has spent years of his life in honourable service to the people of South Africa.

Hon Chairperson, it is not by accident that Mr Makwetu’s name has become a household name in South Africa. His career has attracted the attention of many South Africans who requires justice and more especially who wanted financial justice. He surely lived up to high moral

standards and throughout his 10 years of being an Auditor-General, he showed South Africans and his colleagues what it was to truly be independent, and what a career he has had.

While the audit outcomes of municipalities and government departments and entities have declined, the Auditor- General has never swayed from his demand of good governance and accountability. In my view, Ntate Makwetu, apart from all the good work you have done, your biggest legacy will be the Public Audit Amendment Act. I can just imagine how frustrating it must have been for you over the years, to have done your audits, make your findings and give your recommendations just to see so that very few of them were implemented.

It was very worrying to have seen that the ANC government as well as most ANC-run provinces and municipalities could not implement your proposed measures that would have led to better consequence management and in turn better governance in the interest of our people. Audit outcome after audit outcome. we saw how the auditor

general complained about the appointment of people who did not have the required qualifications.

We saw how you complained about poor management by senior officials and we also saw how out continuously reported and condemned the constant occurrence of corruption. Your insistence, that the office of the Auditor-General be given some feed to ensure that the accountability results in consequence management, paved the way for the Public Audit Amendment Act which will hopefully lead to better governance in our country. Unfortunately, we have yet to see that applied successfully. But Mr Makwetu irrespective of that, you laid the foundation thereof and for that we thank you.

Hon Chairperson, we recently learnt that the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, is investigating two-thirds of governments expenditure on the Corona Virus pandemic for possible corruption, we can just hope that Mr Makwetu and his officers push for good governance, as well as their unwavering condemnation of corruption will lead to harsh consequences for those cadres who are again responsible for these horrendous acts of corruption.

Hon Chairperson, unfortunately all good things must come to an end, and so it is as well with Mr Makwetu’s role as Auditor-General. We do, however, take comfort in the fact that the institution is bigger than the individual. We have got confidence that Mr Makwetu leave behind a team of principled, hardworking and uncompromising staff.

Ntate Makwetu, you leave behind a track record of excellence to be used as a benchmark for your successor, who by the way, has got big shoes to fill.

You leave behind a piece of legislation that will help to correct South Africa’s trajectory for years to come.

Ntate Makwetu you have served your country with distinction. Your duty to us as a nation is done. We thank you for the honourable way in which you have executed your responsibilities. You truly are a man of integrity, and we wish you happiness, success and a long life in your new adventures. Long live Kimi Makwetu, long live. Thank you so much.

Mr M S MOLETSANE: Hon Chairperson and hon members, on behalf of my organisation, the EFF, allow me to say that it is not every day that the country is united in honour

of an exceptional individual and a committed public servant. We join the rest of the country too in showing our gratitude to the outgoing Auditor-General, Kimi Makwetu, who has served the country with absolute dignity even during difficult times.

It was during his tenure that a need for a tighter legislative framework was developed in order to hold those ignoring recommendations of the Auditor-General to account. Today, almost all municipalities are dysfunctional.

Most national and provincial government departments have been looted dry by the leeches ruling our nation. The Office of the Auditor-General has consistently flagged these irregularities and consistently made recommendations about improving prudent use of financial resources but these have been ignored repeatedly by the gang of looters. The result now is that we have a completely collapsed form of governance. Had those in power implemented the recommendations of the Auditor- General, those responsible for looting our nation would

be in jail and most of our municipalities would be functional.

As you leave, Mr Makwetu, you must leave knowing that you did what you could. It was the ruling leeches who failed you and your office. We honour you for the role you have played in revealing the extent of the rot in the public service, and wish you well for your future endeavours.

We would also like to pledge our support to the incoming Auditor-General, Ms Tsakani Maluleke, and urge her to continue the good work of the Office of the Auditor- General. I thank you.

Mr S E MFAYELA: Hon Chairperson, as the IFP we would like to pay a deserved tribute to our Auditor-General of South Africa, Mr T K Makwetu, for his outstanding work as a custodian of our Constitution. The Auditor-General is a Chapter 9 institution with a constitutional mandate to advance financial accountability in the public sector.

The Auditor-General is serving in the Constitutional democracy through its auditing of expenditure of all

spheres of government. Its primary function lies in ensuring that accurate accounting procedures and standards are followed regarding government’s expenditure and its revenue reported.

The Auditor-General’s sterling work highlights a huge problem our country is facing with irregular expenditure in municipalities, currently standing at R32 billion. The Auditor-General’s work to improving the financial wellbeing in the public sector must be respected at all times as it protects the country’s economic status from its investments, and most importantly protects the public from rampage corruption.

In some instances, the Office of the Auditor-General couldn’t even enter the offices of some municipalities because their presence there was going to expose the corruption that was taking place. Therefore, Mr Auditor- General, you have been a real ambassador in good governance. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours. Go well and go shell.

Mr S F DU TOIT: Hon Chair, the FF Plus would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to retiring Auditor-General, Kimi Makwetu, for his seven years of exemplary service to the nation.

His nonrenewable term has come to an end. It has not been an easy job, particularly in performing audits in the chaotic world of local government.

He has performed excellently and has been a great asset to the nation, but sadly the law has not given him enough teeth to ensure that government is held to account.

We wish him and his family everything of the best on their road into the future. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Y I CARRIM: Chairperson, we all so often hear that the state is weak and dysfunctional and that the people in key positions are useless, corrupt and no more than ANC haps. But who in their wildest imagination can say that about Mr Kimi Makwetu or most of the Auditor-Generals, AG, if not all of the Auditor-Generals, since 1994.

Frankly, not only did he and his predecessors serve the

country tremendously well, but in many senses, they are world-class.

There have been other institutions and those who have led them. Think of the Constitutional Court whose judgements are studied at universities from Harvard to Oxford, and universities on the continent and elsewhere in the developing world. Think also of the IEC. Yes, there have been some glitches, but it remains a world-class institution, and until recently, Sars too. And of course, National Treasury with its openness and transparency of budgeting is amongst the top three in the world, even now, and it led, in many senses, the Public Finance Management Act.

Just look at who is to succeed Mr Makwetu. Ms Tsakani Maluleke is not only very young, she is a “she”. First to lead the Auditor-General’s office. Actually, she and her predecessors broke all the racial and gender stereotypes about who is skilled to manage statistics, figures, finances and auditing.

Yes, we say that we have many problems in our country. Let us admit that, the ANC does and the government does, but let us also recognise world-class where we see it.

I will not respond to the petty ... [Inaudible.] ... of the other parties. This is not the occasion. Mr Makwetu, we are very proud of you and we wish you well for the future.

Let me go on to say that Mr Makwetu’s, the AG’s, influence has been tremendous. If you look for example at auditing, our auditing stands amongst the best in the world, despite corruption. And the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors has many times been awarded by world bodies, including international relevant bodies for being responsible for excellent standards overall, as indeed has our country and Parliament.

Right now, the powers of the auditors are being amended in a Bill before the NA that will come shortly to the NCOP. The Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors will have its powers strengthen through the Auditing Profession Amendment Bill. It can carry out search and

seizures, it can also investigate and secure information for those investigations and disciplinary processes, it has power to issue warrants for entering and searching a premises.

The current AG would be remembered most for his influential role in the change of the Public Audit Act. The concerns that he and others have expressed over the years are that, on reports on municipalities that they present, which are made public and presented to parliamentary committees - no less than a month ago and also yet again - there are no consequences for failures or material irregularities, unauthorised spending, irregular and other wasteful expenditures and so on.

Now this changes, given what Ms Lukas, our Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, has said. I echo everything she has said in her excellent input at the beginning. She covered a lot of ground that I would have otherwise covered.

It gives the Auditor-General’s office increasing powers to actually ensure consequences and remedial action, if

such consequences don’t count. It gives, as the Auditor- General says, more teeth to his office. They can issue certificates of debt to accounting officers responsible for disregarding auditing regulations, which results in the misuse of funds. The amendments to the Act also give the necessary powers to take any remedial action or issuing of a certificate of debt. The Auditor-General has referral powers on material irregularities to relevant public bodies for further investigations, and powers to issue a certificate of debt, a I have said.

What the Auditor-General is very well known for is his focus on the findings being accessible and in simple language and that is very important. We thank you, AG, for that. He once said that it is not just economists or accountants or MPs that read his reports, but it should be understood by a person who opens a tap and no water comes out. How evocative that is!

On termination of auditing contracts ... [Inaudible.] ... of them in any public entity. In the case ... [Inaudible.] ... that is once again in the media this week and last week for his errant behaviour. He is hiding

somewhere in Dubai or wherever it is. He has run away from his own country, which alone is an admission of guilt.

On the Covid-19 corruption report, what is there for me to say? We got excellent work again by your office, AG. On municipalities, many of your reports have in fact led to this very House adopting section 139, interventions or supporting those that have been adopted. Excellent work again!

We really should welcome the new AG. It seems to me that she will keep the same standards, unlike some hints by a certain member in this House, that we have had until now. She in fact stood out because of her experience, as stated in the report from that committee which chose her. She has the necessary leadership skills in public finance management, auditing and the like. She has been the Deputy since 2014 and she has been in the career, both in the private and public sectors, of auditing for 20 years.

So, we would like to say that, ultimately, the best tribute we can pay to the AG is to actually take

seriously the work of the AG’s office. That is the biggest tribute we can pay to the Auditor-General.

Personally, ... I know younger people feel that you and I and others of our generation should not be here, but the one advantage is that we have known some of these people for years. I obviously personally know Mr Makwetu before he became AG. He had many roles. He has excelled in all of them actually. So, it is a personal loss, if you like, for those of us who have known him for so long.

We wish him well. We have no doubt that wherever he goes, he will be a huge credit, hopefully in some role in the public sector or semi-public sector, but even in the private sector, he will retain his commitment to excellence, anticorruption, high auditing standards. In whatever job the law allows him to do, at some or other stage, he will play his role. He will do voluntary work as well.

So, Ms Tsakani, we wish you well. Chairperson, I am not sure why you are laughing, but there is no greater tribute we can pay Mr Makwethu than ... [Inaudible.] ...

but for once, we should just ... [Inaudible.] ... because it is too important an occasion.

Finally, this is almost Mandela ... Forget the EFF for now ... Mandela ... [Inaudible.] ... the moment. Never since 2014, 2019, last year when we got here, have the parties in this House shown such a level of similarity in their approach. Thank you, Mr Makwetu, to put it mildly.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: We do not want to be seen as putting any pressure on the AG. I am sure members will agree with me that we may ask Mr Makwetu, should he wish to do so, just to say a few words. [Interjections.]

Mr T K MAKWETU: Hon Chair and all the members, thank you for the wonderful words of encouragement, they echo the feeling of all the staff in the office. I visited them in the most recent days saying my farewells across the country and in all the provinces. One key message that we are coming up with, is exactly what the Members of the NCOP have said.

They said to me that the journey that they have been on in this office has given them a new sense of purpose.

Chair, these are young South Africans who have qualified at our universities, signed up to be public sector auditors, aligned themselves to the development of the jurisprudence in the audit institution. They are equally excited about the journey about the journey forward, because now they are getting counted among many professionals in public institutions who add value to their citizens, who add value to society.

In echoing the words of hon Carrim, I would like to also say, in looking after the institution going forward, it will also be important to jealously guard for those young people who do this work on behalf of the whole country because at times some people think that they can abuse them at any time. I think that they are resolute about the fact that they carry a constitutional mandate on behalf of all of us as South Africans.

*IsiXhosa*:

Bawo uMasondo ngaloo mazwi, ndizama ukubayaleza nabo ...

*English*:

... so that as you ponder the future, you keep them in mind because tomorrow, as some of them have already told me, they are positioning themselves to be the Auditor General of this country even if it happens in 2050. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: We will then proceed firstly by making an announcement that after this seating, the NCOP delegates should remain for a briefing on the provincial week. Remain for the briefing on the provincial week. Please remain on the platform

The Council adjourned at 16:05.