**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WEDNESDAY,**

**12 MAY 2021**

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY***

The House met at 15:02.

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

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, 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.

Members who will pose supplementary questions will be recognised by a presiding officer. In allocating opportunities for supplementary questions, the principle of fairness is always applied. If a member who is supposed to ask a supplementary question through 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.

When all supplementary questions have been answered by the Deputy President we will proceed to the next question on the Question Paper.

Question 7:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, in December 2019 Cabinet adopted a report on the government’s response to the recommendation of the advisory panel on agriculture and land reform. Cabinet emphasised the need to move with speed in the implementation of the panel’s recommendations to ensure that our land reform programme urgently responds to developmental imperatives of restorative justice, economic inclusion and social cohesion.

For us the work of the panel foregrounded the centrality of the three key pillars of our land reform programme, namely: restitution, redistribution and land tenure.

As we implement the panel’s recommendations we will continue to pay equal attention to this key policy instruments while ensuring that our approach to land reform does not impact

negatively on agricultural production and the economy in general.

More significantly, the constitutionally defined parts of our land reform programme will continue to focus on balancing the needs of reversing the legacy of land possession and deprivation with the vision of fostering nation building, unity and social cohesion. Access to land is an act of social justice that cannot be delayed.

The recommendations of the panel covered a wide range of climatic areas focusing on legislative and policy interventions, integrated land administration, spatial development planning to guide land use decisions, fast tracking outstanding land claims as well as key measures to accelerate the release of land for redistribution. As government we are on course in terms of the implementation process.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land Reform and Agriculture receive regular reports on the implementation of the panel’s recommendations that is responsible for ensuring that Cabinet is briefed accordingly.

With regard to the key legislative and policy intervention, some of the key achievements includes but not limited to: the finalisation of the Expropriation Bill of 2020 which is currently before Parliament; the finalisation and submission to Parliament of the Land Court Bill to provide for the establishment of the court that will focus on land matters, set out clear dispute resolution mechanism and strengthen jurisprudence on land related matters; the adoption of the beneficiary selection and land allocation policy that guides allocation of land to different categories of beneficiaries; ensuring that land donation policy is approved to guide land donation transactions by the private sector and institutions that are keen to contribute to our land reform programme.

Furthermore, Cabinet has adopted a position paper on land administration and tenure reform for consultation with various stakeholders. The process of consultation with provinces on the position paper is in progress. This will be followed by the land summit with traditional leaders in order to find common ground on land tenure reform and approaches to land under the custodianship of traditional leaders.

Alongside land tenure reforms the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land Reform and Agriculture has focused on accelerating the

settlement of outstanding land claims and handing over of title deeds to rightful owners of land. As part of this we have instituted a co-ordinated government approach towards ensuring restituted land is coupled with a targeted package of development support to ensure that beneficiaries of restituted land are empowered to utilise their land productively.

We are equally making progress on the development of an overarching land administration policy framework that prioritises the recordal of all land rights.

Work on the finalisation of the national development spatial framework is in progress to ensure that it guides overall land use decisions across the country. It will also provide for the alignment of various planning instruments with the context of the District Development Model.

Guided by spatial development needs our land reform programme is already focusing on the release of strategically located land for human settlements, economic development and social inclusion.

As part of the human settlement framework for spatial transformation and consolidation, 136 priority housing

development areas have been declared as spaces for development of human settlements including mixed use, high density and multiple types of housing developments. These developments will be supported with the necessary requisite infrastructure to ensure sustainability and better quality of life for our citizens.

The release of state-owned land is in progress. The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development announced the advertisement of 529 000 hectares of land available for release as part of the 700 000 hectares that was announced by the President in February 2020 state of the nation address.

To date, 436 563 hectares had been released and approved for allocation under land redistribution programme; over 5 540 hectares of the 436 563 hectares have been approved for disposal and the remainder for leasing.

Furthermore, we will be releasing state-owned land to address development pressures around urban and rural human settlements, agricultural production, industrial development. The process of releasing state land for agricultural purposes is targeted at vulnerable groups of our society, as we have

said before, and will empower women, youth and people with disabilities.

To ensure that land is productively utilised by beneficiaries, government is paying attention to the provision of effective post-settlement support. We are focusing on improving coordination of integrated post-settlement packages to beneficiaries of land including finance, infrastructure and access to water resources for development.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has set aside R1 billion for the blended financing scheme of which R200 million was authorised to be transferred to the Industrial Development Cooperation, IDC, for dispersement. This support will go a long way towards supporting the commercialisation of black producers in the agricultural value chain.

The blended finance scheme is a combination of loans and grants to support agricultural development and improve access to affordable finance by producers.

We are confident that while a lot of work still remains we’ve

made significant strides in implementing the recommendations

of the panel on land reform and agriculture. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Ms K D MAHLATSI: Deputy President, you have touched on an important aspect in the development of the agricultural sector and that is most importantly the post-settlement support and other related challenges of access to finance, lack of adequate agricultural infrastructure and access to water resources.

Now, what are the government’s plans in terms of ensuring that water boards across the length and breadth of our country are properly placed at the centre or at service of the agricultural sector and thus playing a developmental role that ensure increased agricultural productivity and food security? Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, we are quite aware that agriculture is one of the largest consumer of water in the country. That is why government must find a way of upscaling investment in irrigation infrastructure and implement key institutional reforms to ensure increased agricultural production and food security. To this end, the process is

underway to rationalise water boards and establish regional water utilities.

We are also in the process of rationalising the board itself so that we ensure that they possess the requisite skills to be able to discharge their work skills such as engineering skills, financial skills, legal skills as well as human resource skills.

Relocation of water rights to smallholder farming and farmers will also preoccupy our agenda going forward. To date, the department of water and sanitation has issued 107 water licences since November 2019. The target for 2021-22 is to issue licences to be used for 1 250 hectares to smallholder farmers.

We are doing this to ensure that we open for new entrances and we support them to be productive. Thank you very much.

Ms A STEYN: Deputy President, on 18 May 2018, that’s almost three years ago, President Ramaphosa handed out title deeds in Tembisa during his Thumamina campaign. He committed to ensuring that the deeds office will fast-track the process of

handing out title deeds to the residents and declared title deed Fridays.

Deputy President, since then I have been inundated by the calls of help from black farmers who have received eviction letters from your government. You might have read in the media about Mr Ivan Cloete, Mr Vuyani Zigana and all the farmers in Mpumalanga, your home province, where they have received letters to evict the state-owned farms. Mr Rakgase had to take government to court to get title to his land.

Could you please tell me how many title deeds did your ANC government hand out in the past three years? Thank you.

Listening to you, Deputy President, answering your question, it sounds like all is well in this department ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, no. Now you’re going over

time.

Members, I want to repeat: you were allocated time, please do not exceed it. I’m simply enforcing what you agreed to. You can’t change it in the House; not without the permission of the House. When I say stop, I mean it.

Hon Deputy President!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, I am quite content with the progress that is made by the deeds office because currently as we are speaking we continue with our programme of handing out title deeds. In the coming weeks, months, we’ll be doing so all over the country. So, I’m quite happy with the progress that the office is making.

But I am willing to take the concerns raised by the hon member of black farmers that are being evicted, that are currently occupying state land; so that we can understand exactly the reason why are they evicted and if there is a way we can assist them.

Now, beyond this session of Parliament we will request the hon member to get in touch with us so that we can assist those small emerging farmers. Thank you.

Ms T BREEDT: Deputy President, the Matjhabeng Local Municipality recently provided 139 farms as guarantee against state owing to Eskom; the total value of the farms is

R2,5 billion. Matjhabeng is not the only municipality in South

Africa that owes Eskom money and surely not the last to provide state-owned land as guarantee for these debts.

Understandably, Eskom needs collateral for monies owed. But the reality is that these are farms that could have been used for the government’s commitment to release state-owned land.

In light of the indication that state-owned land will be prioritised for redistribution, has the government taken into account that land given as guarantee will possibly hamper redistribution thereof and what is the plan to guarantee these debts should be available land be redistributed? Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, we are quite keen to investigate the matter of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality.

In our engagements with all municipalities that are owing Eskom, we have finally reached an agreement that all the municipalities that are owing Eskom, especially the first 18 municipalities that are owing large sums of money, we are going to request Eskom to take over the distribution and the collection of rates so that finally Eskom can improve the

revenue collection of the municipality and allow the municipality to repay its debts.

So, we are proceeding with the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality taking this route and I am sure a number of municipalities are going to follow.

I am confident that the land that has been utilised here by land that has been taken by Eskom, if we enter into this kind of an approach that land will be released, will come back to the state and the state would accordingly redistribute that land to people that need to farm, especially our small farmers. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon Deputy President, in 2003 the Commission on Traditional Leadership, Disputes and Claims was established. It was tasked with restoring the dignity of traditional leaders and their communities. The Griqua community, the Khoi community and the San community, indigenous South African ... [sound cut.] [Inaudible.] ... were disposed having endured much [Inaudible.] ... and we have a culture ... about no land ...

Are you prepared, hon Deputy president, [Inaudible.] to return a profit of land to [Inaudible.] by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land Reform and Agriculture carries out its mandate to fast-track land reform?

These communities can then use the land for agriculture, human settlement and industrial development. This will be your legacy and you’ll be remembered for [Inaudible.] and promoting inclusive economic participation. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Xola, please mute your system there. You seem to forget it, it happens too often now, it’s a pattern. Please close your mic.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, firstly, I think we need to address the recognition of the Khoi and San traditional leadership and that is going to be done through the Bill that is before Parliament.

Secondly, through our [Inaudible.] solution and our restitution programme we are willing to restore land that was dispossessed from these communities, the Khoi and the San.

Now, in that process we are expecting them to put a formal

claim and from there we are going to investigate the claim and we are going to speed it up and ensure that the rightful land is restored to them. But, of course, in terms of the traditional leaders the land that is under their custodian, the communal land. We are now in a process of consulting with traditional leaders on how best to handle ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy President, one moment. Hon members, you have invited the Deputy President to answer your questions. If you compete with him now with your whatever you call what you are doing, it’s inappropriate. So, can you please hold on to your horses? You will get a chance to use your airtime outside the chamber, preferably. Thank you, Deputy President. Please proceed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, we are in a process of consultation on how best to administer land that is the under the custodianship of traditional leaders. We are doing so, so that our people living in rural areas under the leadership of traditional leaders must also get the same benefits in terms of the land that they are staying on. They must be able to get title where they are staying, they must be able to do land transactions that will allow them to enter into commercial transactions that will benefit them.

So, at the end of the process we’re going to take product of that consultation process back to Cabinet and the policy will be put in place. Thank you very much.

Question 8:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. As government, we acknowledge that the economic climate we are currently facing as a country is a very challenging one and impacting individuals at a household level. Unfortunately, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has further compounded our situation. As such we fully understand growing calls for Eskom’s tariffs to be kept at a reasonable level of affordability, especially for the poor and marginalised communities.

Therefore, it must be noted that the estimated tariff increase is subject to assessment and decisions by the National Energy Regulator of South Africa. All of us should protect the operational independence of our regulator, but still require of it to apply appropriate tariff mechanisms in the determination of tariffs associated with the type of power that is required to balance the system over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework.

The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy has advised that, if based on weighted average cost per unit of about R1,57 per kilowatt an hour from the preferred bidder projects, it is estimated that the additional 1 995 megawatts of capacity may result in electricity tariff increase of between 3% to 5%. I must repeat this that it may result in the increase of the tariffs but we will await the decision of the regulator in this instance. It must be noted that the cost includes both capacity and energy as per the requirements of Eskom system operator.

The nature of electricity supply constraints which also relates to increased variability and nondispatchability of some supply options has necessitated the consideration of the risk mitigation independent power producer procurement programme in order to alleviate current electricity supply constraints.

The 20-year commitment seeks to, amongst others, ensure reasonable electricity unit cost while taking into account the said nature of electricity supply constraints. Basing the risk mitigation independent power producer procurement on a 20-year power purchase agreement, will ensure that the projects around this additional capacity remain sustainable. This means that

costs are covered, whilst guaranteeing capacity that is available to generate electricity whenever a dispatch instruction has been activated. The need to attract long-term investments in power generation is key to ensuring the security of energy supply while also realising expected returns from such investments by the private sector.

These initiatives emphasise government’s commitment to ensure energy security from a wide range of energy sources and technologies in line with the Integrated Resource Plan of 2019. We further aim to reduce extensive utilisation of expensive diesel-based kick-in open side generators in the medium- to long-term. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

Mr K J MILEHAM: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Deputy President, in the last few weeks a number of allegations have arisen around the risk mitigation independent power

producer procurement. Specifically, there are allegations that politically connected individuals have benefitted from the process, and that senior department officials and families of Minister Mantashe had attempted to manipulate the process of identifying successful bidders.

Additionally, there are questions about one of the bidders who have been associated with corruption in Lebanon forcing that country to impound their assets. There are also concerns that the requests for proposals was drafted with specific outcomes in mind despite the claim that it was technically agnostic and that the length of the contract is not a cost-effective solution to our electricity crisis. While we acknowledge the urgent need to procure additional generation capacity, this cannot occur in an environment of corruption, maladministration and tenderpreneurship.

Last week, the DA requested the Portfolio Committee on Mineral Resources and Energy to investigate the bid adjudication process, the scoring and the role of the politically connected individuals in the process. Our request was rejected. My question is, Deputy President, will you support a comprehensive investigation by this Parliament into this programme, and if not, why not?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. I agree with the hon member that we must at all times fight corruption wherever it emerges. We must be ready as a nation and as a country to fight. If these allegations are something which we can believe I think we must take the necessary

measures and site the relevant institutions about these allegations.

For now, I am taking it as allegations until we have submitted them to the relevant authorities so that they are investigated fully. Now I am not going to instruct Parliament on how best it should conduct its affairs. That will be at the hands of Parliament as they do their oversight to take the appropriate actions where they feel necessary.

But to the hon member in question I would suggest that we approach the law enforcement institutions with these allegations so that it can be probed further. I am happy that you are standing up trying to defend your country - defending it against corruption and all that. It’s a good move, but let’s do it with the appropriate institutions. Thank you very much.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker ...

*IsiXhosa*:

... ndinengxaki kuqhagamshelwano yiyo le nto bungakwazi ukuvela ubuso bam. Sekela Somlomo, ingxaki esinayo thina siyi- UDM ...

*English*:

... with this Risk Mitigation Independent Power Producer

Procurement Programme is that, once again it doesn’t seem like

...

*IsiXhosa*:

... urhulumente uzimisele ukuba akwazi ...

*English*:

... to invest in renewable energy, rather than to continue procuring that energy from the private sector.

*IsiXhosa*:

Umbuzo omileyo ngulo – ndinethemba lokuba uzakukwazi ukuwuphendula noko wena kuba usekhona awunqunyanyiswanga. Sekela Mongameli, ingaba ngawaphi amanyathelo awathathayo urhulumente ukuqinisekisa ukuba ...

*English*:

... when you move away from diesel-base and coal-base from Eskom, that there would be some form of investment between government and Eskom so that the government would have its own renewable energy, for an example independent power producers,

IPPs and have wind farms instead of just continuing to procure energy from the private sector.

*IsiXhosa*:

Yintoni eyenziwa ngurhulumente ukuqinisekisa loo nto? Enkosi.

*IsiZulu:*

USEKELA MONGAMELI: Siyabonga, Sekela Somlomo, esingakusho nje ukuthi u-Eskom yinkampani enkulu kaHulumeni. Yinkampani ebe nezinkinga ikakhulukazi ezimalini. Yinkampani edonsa kanzima ukuthi ikhokhele abantu abayisizayo, abayisebenzelayo. Iphinde idonse kanzima ukuthi iqhubeke nohlelo lwayo lokwakha iziteshi zokuphehla ugesi ezintsha ezimbili i-Medupi ne-Kusile.

Manje-ke ngaphambi kokuba u-Eskom uqhubeke uthathe isinyathelo sokuthi akwazi ukutshala imali ekukhiqizweni kwamandla avuselelekayo kuzofanele ukuthi uEskom aqedele loku kutshala imali akwenzile e-Kusile nokutshala imali e-Medupi. Ngokwethu- ke ukubona sizovakashela i-Medupi ne-Kusile. Sicabanga ukuthi i-Kusile iseduzane nokuthi isebenze ngokugcwele kanye nayo i- Medupi

Sifuna ukuqiniseka ukuthi u-Eskom usebenze ngokuzikhandla ukuze lezo ziteshi zokuphehla ugesi ezimbili ziqedwe. Uzobe

usuyaqhubeka-ke u-Eskom, uma kuvuma izimali, usuyakwazi ukutshala imali ekukhiqizweni kwamandla avuselelekayo.

*English*:

But in the meantime ...

*IsiZulu*:

... siyabona ukuthi ukucinywa kogesi sakuwonga lo ukushoda kwamandla kuyalilimaza izwe. Vele kuzofanela ukuthi sivumele abanye abantu basikhiqizele amandla bese sithenga kubo kuze kube ukuthi u-Eskom ukwazi ukuzimela. Into nje esithembele kuyo ukuthi ugesi loyo nomangabe ungakhiqizwa ngabantu abangasese kungesiwo u-Eskom sizowuthola ngenani elifanele.

Umlawuli kazwelonke wethu lo uyofanela usisize ukuthi nanoma ngubani osidayisela amandla siwathenge ngenani esizokwazi ukuyikhokha thina bahlali baseNingizimu Afrika. Ngiyabonga.

Mr S LUZIPO: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Thank you, Deputy President. I think the Deputy President will agree with me that political loud hailing is a very serious diseases and it is not a sign of ideological development. Therefore, I am sure you will be aware that Parliament has committees, and that committees of Parliament report to Parliament. I hope when

members make themselves political ancestors and speak on behalf of the committees they will be able to explain that they refused to work in co-operation with one of the most strategic committees of Parliament, which is the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Scopa. But obviously we will bring the matter to Parliament.

I think also there is a dissuasion of the question. Let me go to the original question. [Time expired.]

*IsiZulu:*

USEKELA SOMLOMO: Sihlalo wami othandekayo, sikuphelele isikhathi. Ngebhadi sikuphelele isikhathi. [Ubuwelewele.] Hhayi! Sekungubani manje loyo? Ngicela niyivale imibhobho yenu yokukhuluma ngiyacela.

An HON MEMBER: [Inaudible.] [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Come on, you don’t have to do it repeatedly. You know that; you know the Rules. No, do you want to engage me about heckling? That’s out of order! You shouldn’t be doing that.

Mr H G APRIL: Deputy Speaker, most of the members who are sitting here are not wearing their masks. That’s a danger to us. Please!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no, no, that one is out of order. That sustains at least. Hon members, please, put on your masks and close your noses as appropriate as required.

*IsiZulu*:

Sekela Mongameli, manje umbuzo awubuzwanga. Usungaphawula-ke kulokho okushiwo-ke uma uthanda, Sekela Somlomo.

USEKELA MONGAMELI: Cha! Cha, Sekela Somlomo, ngeke ngiphawule kulokho okushiwo ngoba umbuzo awukho. Ngizokulinda umbuzo. [Ubuwelwele.]

USEKELA SOMLOMO: Ngiyaxolisa-ke. Isikhathi sidliwa yinja.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. Deputy President, we are aware that there is no intention to address [Inaudible.] challenges facing Eskom because of incompetence and mismanagement. We are also aware that the International Monetary Fund, IMF, and the World Bank pamphlets paraded as the National Treasury’s economic recovery plan policy is the

one that is guiding the privatisation policy of Eskom. It is irrational and illogical that we can have sensible and practical plans to solve the energy crisis at the same time entering into corrupt contracts intended to benefit companies linked with the wife of the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy with foreign–owned companies fronting local companies in the contract that will cost South Africans R300 billions over 20 years and pay R14 billion for energy when we can pay local renewable energy far less for more energy or even better.

Deputy President, listen to the EFF’s sound guidance and reorientate Eskom to have a balanced mix of nuclear, coal gas and renewable sources build by Eskom employing technicians at Eskom and Eskom owning these sources of power.

Deputy President, should government continue to procure energy from service providers and leave Eskom with no options but pay prices they did not negotiate ...[Time expired.] ... because you can see that the strategy is to privatise Eskom. So, your government intends to really privatise Eskom. Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I like your jersey.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are out of order, hon member. This is a repeat. Hon members, this is not a joke. You are given time and you should stick to it. The next thing you go screaming about how we hate you whereas you hate yourself.

*IsiZulu*:

... angazi noma uwuzwile lo mbuzo lo. Awuwuzame-ke baba.

*English*:

Ms O M C MAOTWE: He heard it very well.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, you are out of order. Stop doing what you are doing.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Deputy Speaker. The first question that I need to address is that as a country and as government we must do everything possible to try and assist Eskom to come out of this problem so that we can have a secured energy supply. This is good for our economy and this is good if we want to attract investment. If we want to grow our economic fortunes it is important that Eskom be supported by all means. If the leadership of Eskom is trying very hard I think it is important for us to give them the necessary support.

I am aware that in the process of procuring whatever in government, there will always be allegations of corruption. I am saying that as a democratic country we have institutions that can really probe these allegations. Let us not talk about it, but let us go and report it and say there are these allegations and let us probe them.

As for the current challenge we are facing as a country that we have a shortage of energy, it is important to solve this shortage in the medium-term so that we allow our power utility, Eskom, to deal with its own problem. And of course as a country we might think of creating another entity that will support Eskom. We can even create three entities which can generate electricity. China has three entities that are generating electricity and they are all state entities. It is now clear that we cannot put all our eggs in one basket. We must probably try and create other entities that will relieve the pressure from Eskom.

As we procure and do this and that and there is corruption, I think we must deal with it. We can’t be afraid to deal with our problem of solving the shortage of energy and be afraid of buying additional energy. If in the process of buying

corruption is detected, I think the law must take its course. Thank you very much.

Question 9:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, the COVID-19 vaccine market is a very different market from the usual markets that we know for medicines. Globally, countries have limited options since all COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers have adopted the same approach. Therefore, countries must accept full liability for the vaccines they acquire.

In our case in South Africa it was either we accept these clauses as a country, or we do not have access to any of these vaccines. Whilst faced with these conditions, government had a further obligation stemming from these conditions of establishing a COVID-19 Vaccine Injury, No Fault Compensation Scheme. This is one of the critical component of ensuring that there are no hindrances in South Africa delivering a successful vaccinations plan.

The scheme will be operational for a limited period. In the main, this scheme will provide expeditious an easy access to compensation for a person who suffer harm, loss or damage as a result of vaccine injury that may be caused by the

administration of COVID-19 vaccine, specified in terms of regulations at a facility within the country.

We have a responsibility to ensure that our people are protected through this scheme. Manufacturers of COVID-19 vaccines will not take any contribution to this more fold compensation system, as this is part of the contractual obligation for all countries that acquire COVID-19 vaccines.

We are learning from the recent experience of governments who are reviewing reports of potential cases of severe side- effects amongst vaccinated members of their population, that such a scheme is very important. The COVID-19 Vaccine Injury, No Fault Compensation Scheme will contain and minimise the effects that may arise as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we take lessons from the implementation of South Africa’s COVID-19 response plan, we continue to forge ahead with plans of building capacity to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines locally through harnessing our existing manufacturing capabilities in partially state-owned Biovac institution, as well as research and development capabilities with partners in BRICS.

We are encouraged by recent announcement of an anticipated waver on intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines that is proposed by South Africa and India and now supported by the United States of America. The proposal establishes a global solution to enhance manufacturing and boost supply capacity and enables co-ordination and access to information currently under patent protection.

For countries that do not currently have manufacturing capacity on certain medical technologies, the waver could open up more supply options and avoid countries being reliant only on one or two suppliers. Where supply capacity currently exists, it can be repurposed to COVID-19 vaccines production, and in this way improve the supply available to all nations.

South Africa and Africa as a whole stand to benefit by timely access to affordable vaccines.

Alongside these efforts, the South African government continues to ensure that COVID-19 vaccination rollout plan reaches all population groups providing equal access to those in urban and rural areas of the country. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

REV K R J MESHOE: Deputy Speaker, thank you for that reply. I must say that it is concerning to note that manufacturers of COVID-19 vaccines have demanded that countries who use their vaccines should grant them indemnity from prosecution should their vaccines cause injuries or even death in some cases.

It is also concerning that these manufacturers have coerced countries using their products to start the COVID-19 vaccine injury, no fault compensation scheme. My question to you, Deputy President, is that if these manufacturers are confident that their products are as safe as they claim, why would they insist on indemnification, and how does government plan to fund this no fault compensation scheme without their contribution? In the light of the poor state of our economy, I want to plead with you, sir, not to support suggestions to impose another levy on South African taxpayers to compensate for liabilities incurred by vaccine manufacturers. I thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: We have already acceded to this condition, and as Cabinet we have agreed that we are going to put together this fund because we must proceed with the vaccination process and that was one condition for us to sign the agreement. So we have signed the agreement with the

intention that we must proceed and vaccinate our nation, so that we can fight this pandemic. Of course, in medicine, whatever medicine you take, hon Meshoe, there are side effects depending on the comorbidities that you carry as a human being. By taking any medication it might, on the basis of your comorbidities, the side effects affect you. In that case you can claim because it was in the process of trying to helping you.

We just thought that we cannot as a country be excluded to these vaccination process just because we are failing to sign and accept this clause. So we accepted the clause and we are proceeding and I don’t think we are aiming to introduce any tax for that purpose. Yes, we are proceeding to establish the fund. Thank you.

Ms S GWARUBE: Deputy Speaker, to the Deputy President, it has been confirmed over the past week that the COVID-19 variant dominant in India, has been detected in South Africa and experts have also warned that there is a possibility of a new variant during the third wave. These are news that are coming at the back of indications that there are some spikes in infections and that perhaps the third wave might be upon us. Yet, this government is yet to vaccinate even 500 5000

healthcare workers, despite a commitment made months ago that 1,2 million of them would be inoculated.

Based on this information, how can we trust that government will be able to rollout the vaccine to the rest of South Africa on Monday, 17, when rollout has been criminally slow? Would you also acknowledge that this vaccination programme has been a spectacular failure on the path of government?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, yes, we must accept that our vaccination process has been very slow, I think affected by a number of factors. Firstly, you remember the AstraZeneca vaccination that we had to give to the African Union because of variant and that vaccine was not really efficient — the efficacy was sort of not up to scratch, so we had to take that vaccine to other countries in the in the continent. Now, that was almost a million of vaccines. It took us back in terms of our programme, phase one. And of course, the agreement that we have made with Johnson and Johnson was affected by the discovery of some blood clots in some of the people that there have been administered with Johnson and Johnson in the US, and that has also the resulted into some delays in the rollout of vaccinations.

I think we have received now almost above 600 000 doses of Pfizer and we will be starting to vaccinate. Of course Pfizer is a double dose — it is not the same as the Johnson and Johnson. But we are confident that we are going to receive our Johnson and Johnson supply and we will be able to catch up with our phase one and start in earnest with phase two and move with speed.

Our people must understand that our pace of vaccination depends on the availability of the vaccines. If the vaccines are not available — everyone is going for these vaccines — but as a country, I think we have secured two suppliers: That is Johnson and Johnson and Pfizer. We have signed contracts, like the Minister has said and we have agreed on a certain number of doses and we are now expecting them to deliver on those doses. So we are going to proceed. I think we need to be patient. We are going to start on 17 if everything goes well. Thank you very much.

Ms M D HLENGWA: Deputy Speaker, can the Deputy President please provide examples of similar compensation scheme in South Africa that gave recourse to, for example, children who experience extreme adverse reactions to early childhood vaccinations? I thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, I do not have an example outright from where I’m sitting, but I can cite and I think we have tried to explain exactly the fund and how these fund is going to be utilised, how claimants are going to access the funds, the kind of panel that we are going to set up so that we are going to receive and interrogate the claimants for the correctness of the claims. That is what I can say, Deputy Speaker.

Ms N V MENTE: Deputy Speaker, to the Deputy President, the Rands and cents are very important on procurement. One of the most concerning things relating to the manner you are acquiring these vaccines, is the air secrecy surrounding the deals you made with these manufactures. You are hiding behind nondisclosure agreements to prevent scrutiny in relation to the prices of the vaccines and the potential collusion and corruption that will surely happen. The fact that you are hell bent on getting specific vaccines over others that are proven to work, is proof of this collusion. What guarantees can give South Africans that the process followed in acquiring these vaccines is above board and won’t compromise our sovereignty? And would you support citizen action to full disclosure of the terms and conditions of your deals with the vaccine manufacturers? The terms you have indicated earlier, as well

as the pricing in the full process that you are undertaking to procure. Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I think every vaccine that we receive as a country go through a process. Our regulatory bodies would check these vaccines whether they are suitable to be consumed by our people. That is why we had to return the AstraZeneca vaccine because of these regulatory bodies that have checked to say the efficacy of this vaccine is very low. We do not just simply acquire but we follow a process. Of course there is Sputnik from Russia and Sinopharm from China. All those are in the process of being checked by our regulatory institutions, Cipro, and we requested them to speed up their checking so that we can also acquire some vaccines from these bodies. Otherwise wouldn’t delaying our process of vaccination if we have an option to buy from other people. But whatever we buy, we must check the correctness of those vaccines.

I can assure you that the nondisclosure agreement that we have signed compels the parties not to disclose. Now, I take it that in the final analysis, our Auditor-General would be able to see the value for money. I mean we will be able to disclose to such institutions Auditor-General to say, why paying so much instead of paying so much. But in this case it is either

you take it or leave it. The price is set and we negotiated the prices, and in certain instances they give you a discount and in some they don’t.

From where I am sitting I am quite confident about the process that we have followed to ensure that there is no corruption in the process. We have an Inter-Ministerial Committee that is sitting and looking at all these processes, and if we detect any sign of corruption we follow it. So, where we are I am confident that the process is above board. Thank you very much.

Question 10:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, we believe that the statistics that hon Nkomo refers to in her question are the results of the labour survey released by Stats SA on a quarterly basis. In part, these figures point to a deep-seated challenge of structural unemployment as one of the key constrain to labour absorption capacity of the economy.

Structural unemployment is characterised by a mismatch between the skills that workers can offer and what the sector requires. It is for this reason that the Human Resource Development Council of South Africa is thus focus on ensuring

that the education sector provide the necessary required skills that are required by the labour market. Notably, the results of the survey show the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market particularly affected individuals in the poorest South African households. The less skilled, the low wage workers, informal workers, those with transept employment and persistent non-employment histories and persons living in poor urban communities more particularly women.

This is not unique to South Africa as labour markets across the world have been heavily affected by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. In our case, overcoming the unacceptably high levels of unemployment and poverty requires us to respond with a range of sectoral and cross sectoral programmes. To this end, the Presidency is overseeing the implementation of the Presidential Employment Stimulus which is focused on co- ordinating enhancing and upscaling a range of existing programme across government and do close partnership with the private sector.

Among these government public employment programmes, the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, and the Community Works Programme, CWP, which have been supported to rollout public employment at a new and innovative scarce. In terms of the

EPWP, we have as government set a target of 694 155 jobs and livelihood opportunities. Thus far, we are implementing

576 674 opportunities, which is almost 83% of the programme.

Through these programmes, there is a concerted effort investing in public goods and services that can enhance skills and employability and ensuring that support to livelihood is realised while the labour market recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the Presidential Employment Stimulus is designed to effectively transition young people into the labour market aiming to significantly reduce the high rate of unemployment. In this regard, government has among others implemented the following intervention: Basic education employment initiative which has placed over 317 000 young people, as school assistance since October last year. This is a massive scale up of rapid rollout. These young people are earning the National Minimum Wage which enhances the impact of poverty and inequality.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, DPWI, has created 1 886 work opportunities for young professionals in the built environment. These beneficiaries were deployed and

exposed to workplace experiences in programmes such as the Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme, In-House Construction Projects, Water and Energy Efficiency Programme and Facilities Management Employment among others.

Government has managed to create 865 495 work opportunities from 12 869 projects, implemented across all EPWP sectors in all spheres of government so far in the 2020-21 Financial Year. In addition, the various programmes, which are led by the Department of Social Development have in a way contributed to countering the impact of unemployment and inequality at household level. For instance, the Social Relief of Distress Grant is currently supporting more or less than five million people in South Africa, of which two million people are young people under the age of 35.

Although these expanded relief packages temporary, we have witnessed the reduction of poverty at food poverty line to 18%. In the medium to long-term such social relief assistance will need to be supported through sustainable employment intervention especially targeting young people. This is clear evidence of the need to expand these Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme coupled with active labour market programme to effectively address poverty and inequality.

We believe that creating employment, addressing inequality and alleviating poverty not mutual exclusive. there are pathways of ensuring service delivery, as scene in the EPWP. Therefore, government we will continue to ensure that interventions listed earlier we will continue to improve the lives and livelihoods of all South Africans. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Ms Z NKOMO: Deputy Speaker ...

*IsiZulu:*

... Sekela LikaMongameli angibonge ...

*English*:

... for the response you have provided. Indeed, it is evident from your response that in spite of all the challenges that relates to unemployment, poverty and inequalities the ANC-led government is working very hard to address these challenges.

My follow up question Sekela Mongameli [Deputy President] is that what will be the impact of addressing unemployment, poverty and inequalities to rural and township economies in particular on women youth and persons with disabilities?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, in the main township and rural economies are characterised by small and medium

enterprises. And as government if we support these enterprises we will ensure that we create expanded opportunities for job creation which will contribute in alleviating unemployment, poverty and inequality thereby improving our people’s lives especially women, youth and persons with disabilities.

On our part as government, in March 2020, the Department of Small Business Development launched Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme in order to support small businesses to alleviate the negative impact of the pandemic. The focus of this programme is on micro and informal businesses to restart, rebuild and improve their businesses as part of the reconstruction and recovery process. Through these Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme, we want to support them so that they are sustainable and they get to be linked to local markets, provincial markets and national markets. So we will continue to work with these small enterprises, hon Deputy Speaker, because these are the instruments that we can use to alleviate poverty and unemployment in those rural setups. Thank you very much.

Ms H DENNER: Deputy Speaker, hon Deputy President you have just mentioned the so called employment opportunities to be created by government. But this morning during the meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour, the ANC

members in the committee vehemently defended the Department of Labour’s failure to deliver on the expanded mandate of employment creation citing the covid pandemic as the one and only reason for this failure.

I put it to you that the enemy of employment creation and skills development in South Africa is not the covid pandemic but ANC policies that destroys the economy and its development prospects long before the pandemic. I put it to you that the government nor the Department of Employment and Labour cannot create employment opportunities. Do you agree, then show us? if not, what then is the reason for your failure? Because that is all we see – failure. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, I must put it up front that governments all over the world are not the source of creating employment. Governments all over the words are responsible for creating the necessary environment so that the economy can thrive, people can find jobs, supporting small medium enterprises, supporting companies so that they can produce goods and services and they can employ people.

In a situation where government now becomes the main employer, you must know that in that country there is a problem. So, in

our case - members should be aware that because of this pandemic a lot of businesses had to close down. And in the process, a number of people lost their jobs especially the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise, SMMEs. They have closed down in their numbers and that is why government had to step in and support these SMMEs so that they do not get out of business. In this case, even big business have been affected. So, we had to do everything in our power to try and sustain these businesses.

Naturally, I think we are responsible to creating the necessary environment for businesses to thrive, remove any blockages, remove any delays in terms of our legislation so that businesses can thrive. That is our responsibility as government and we will continue to do that.

We are talking about government’s initiative two create employment because we are in a situation where there is a dire need, our people are hungry, our people are dying our people have lost jobs. So, government had to step in with all these varied programmes so that at least there is food on the table. That is why we opted for the 350 grant. It is not going to be a long-term grant but it is going to be a short-term plan

because we are dealing with a short-term problem. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Shivambu, are you here?

AN HON MEMBER: He is absent.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry!

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: I am here, Deputy Speaker. Hon Mente will speak over.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Go ahead hon Mente.

Ms N V MENTE: Deputy Speaker, Deputy President, there are no public employment programmes in South Africa. The EPWP has proven not to add any value. We also know that the Employment Tax Incentive that was intended to incentivise the employment of young people has failed dismally. Instead EPWP is used by municipalities who do not want to hire trained professionals when there are vacancies instead exploit unemployed people to pay them stipends under the guise of the EPWP.

We also know that today the number has decreased to just over

15 million and this is more than one million jobs lost.

Unemployment in 2018 was 26,7% and today, unemployment is more than 33% that is more than 10,3 million young people. Do you agree that unless South Africa links industrialisation with state procurement including state-owned entities whereby the government buys the majority of its good and services used to deliver services from local manufactures, we will not be able to deal with the problem of service delivery in any significant way? If you agree, why is the government not doing this? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy speaker, I am not aware of the allegations of people abusing the EPWP. It might be there but I am not aware. We agree with the hon member that the EPWP is meant to provide temporary cushion to those that are unemployed, it is not a permanent job opportunity. I think we agree on that point. But in the process, we assist individuals to acquire some skills in the projects where they participate, that skill can help them to find employment elsewhere and probably might move to some permanency. Yes, we agree with the hon member that as government we should support industrialisation. And we should be providing ourselves as the

basic market where all these SMMEs can provide services to government.

All the services that we consume to government can be used to support industrialisation hence all our economic zones that we have established. We are trying very hard to put together SMMEs in those zones so that they start producing goods and services. As government we remain open to buying those goods and services in order to support industrialisation. Thank you very much.

Ms S A BUTHELEZI: Deputy Speaker, can the Deputy President tell us what measures other than job placement are being used as indicators of success in the fight against unemployment?

Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, any programme that we create as government is aimed at alleviating unemployment. The best and single indicator is the creation of the employment itself. We count the number of people that have been employed in that programme and we count the successes in terms of the skills that have been acquired in that programme. Then we can say that the programme has been successful or has not been

successful because the people - yes, they were employed - but they could not gain the required skills.

In the main, all the programmes that we have started especially the one of supporting of assistant teachers in our basic education programme, all these young people were there and they were supporting teachers and they have gained some knowledge on how teaching and learning happens in a school.

They have assisted learners to learn and I am sure there is knowledge that they have gained through their participation at that level. The most important thing is that they have been employed and in the process we have reduced unemployment by those figures that have been employed. Thank you very much.

Question 11:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, every five years, government undertakes a comprehensive review and assessment of progress made to address challenges of joblessness, poverty and inequality. In addition, government conducts reviews of the Mid-Term Strategic Framework, quarterly and annual assessments to evaluate progress made, and challenges encountered in the implementation of varied antipoverty programmes. Such assessments are critical instruments to gauge

how far we have come to eradicate structural inequality and create an inclusive society.

The 25-year review released in 2019, identified, amongst others, the following constraints. Structural inequality, slow redress and transformation; limited state capacity resulting to inability to utilise policy and legislative framework to redress and transform. In this regard, the state has not been able to transform the growth trajectory towards inclusive growth that will create jobs for the labour force that the country has; corruption, real or perceived has hampered the delivery of services, further entrenching inequality of opportunity and constraining the ability of state-owned enterprises to contribute optimally to the developmental agenda; and inadequate and crumbling infrastructure.

On the contrary, the 25-year review has also indicated the following trends for our national democratic society: Notable and quantifiable progress has been made in the provision of basic public services such as water, sanitation, electricity, employment and housing. For the millions of beneficiaries of these services, delivered by post-1994 administrations, notable progress has been observed on government’s efforts to change the lives of South Africans for the better. Life

expectancy has improved and infant mortality has reduced significantly whereby, for example, access to antiretroviral therapy has grown from 45 500 patients in 2004 to over

4,7 million in 2019.

The School Nutrition Programme, which feeds approximately 75% learners per year, has a long term impact for learners who stay in school and complete their education thus acquire qualification that increases their probability of employment and income thus escaping poverty and inequality.

We further observe that social grants remain the country’s largest contributor to efforts of poverty alleviation. This intervention has been able reduce poverty at the lower bound poverty line by 16,4 percentage points, from 42 %to 25,7% as at the end of 2019. However, according to Statistics SA, as at March 2020, 20% of the South African population was living below the food poverty line. This would have increased to 33% by June 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdown.

Therefore, there is a huge opportunity to alleviate poverty through social grants. To ensure sustainability of such interventions, there is a need to link the provision of social

grants to skills development, and creation of local economic development projects. There is no denying that inequality still persists. In fact, the phenomenon of the COVID-19 pandemic, like almost everywhere else in the world, has exposed and exacerbated South Africa’s structural inequality. Most worryingly, the social groups who have borne the brunt of this inequality are women and the young people.

In fact, government’s responsibilities ... [Interjections.]

... have now included addressing both the inherited backlogs from colonialism, apartheid, and the cumulative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is not an exaggeration that this pandemic has significantly reversed the gains we have made since 1994.

In this regard, government is forging ahead with the implementation of priorities identified in the National Development Plan which remains a long-term policy framework leading to 2030. The antipoverty initiatives of government that in the main focuses on the integration of our Public Employment Programmes, are bearing some positive outcomes in mitigating the current impacts of poverty and inequality, as we had mentioned in the earlier response.

Further, this was highlighted last week in this House by the President when he indicated that the President Employment Stimulus is effective in protecting existing jobs and supporting livelihoods. While these poverty alleviation programmes are vital, longer-term solutions depend on our ability to achieve inclusive growth by among others, implementing reforms that are crucial to sustain economic recovery and to address the underlying causes of low economic growth and high unemployment.

In this regard, Operation Vulindlela is directly addressing reforms by reforming network industries to modernise and transform the economy, lower barriers to entry to make it easier for businesses to start, grow and compete in order to ensure economic inclusion resulting in higher levels of employment. Linked to this intervention is the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan which presents a comprehensive policy response to rebuild the economy that has been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Obviously, more needs to be done to broaden the people’s share in the country’s wealth so that we give full material meaning to building social cohesion and nation-building. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am informed that hon P Modise will take this first supplementary question on behalf of the hon Shaik Emam, or is that...

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: It’s Shaik Emam now, Deputy Speaker.

[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oh, okay. No, no, no, I was given wrong

information. I’m sorry. Please go ahead hon Shaik Emam.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Please reprimand them Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. Deputy President, thank you for admitting and acknowledging that indeed there are great challenges as a result of ... [Inaudible.] ... but you say it is as a result of COVID-19. But what I want to draw your attention is that there are more people go hungry today than five years ago.

More people are homeless today than five years ago. More people are jobless today than five years ago. More people are in debt today than five years. More women are today the victims of gender-based violence that five years ago. Now, what has happened in South Africa is that you created a group of millionaires or something like seventeen and a half thousand and while there are millions of poorer people in South Africa.

Now I know that there has been some initiative, but clearly it means that the initiatives and measures put in place, Deputy President, are not good enough. I don’t think we are considering the population growth in the country, and the influx of foreign nationals. But the R300 billion that we use in this country through the procurement processes and the fact that people from rural areas are migrating to urban areas, while urban areas cannot accommodate them because of limited opportunities there. Now, how are we going to do this differently? Clearly, I think we need some policy redirection in order to be able to address this. Together with the cheap imports that are coming into the country which is limiting manufacturing in South Africa. So, there is a whole lot the Deputy President. If you could just give us an indication of how we are going to address this. Thank you, Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. We must acknowledge that the emergence of COVID-19 has taken the country ten steps backwards. Why am I saying so is because we had to go through a period of a lockdown. And remember we went into this COVID-19 situation with the very ailing economy. Our economy was not very good and we went right into a recession. During the COVID-19 period - the worst period 2020, the economy has gone worse. A lot of our people have lost their

jobs, they have lost income and this government were to step in. We must accept that for the very fact that the companies had to close down, as government we lost a lot of revenue. We lost a lot of money that we could have reinvested into building of houses, building of schools, building of roads, for the past year. Now we are talking of a situation where we must rebuild. We are rebuilding coming from a very low base.

So, the hon member Shaik Eman will agree that this democratic government, since 1994 has made some strides in giving people water, in building roads and building schools. But of course the happenings of the past year has taken us backward. Now the future looks very bleak, because we are still in the COVID-19 situation; we are still battling the pandemic. But I am confident that beyond this pandemic we are going to grow our economy, not only growing the economy but growing the economy that will create jobs. Now it is one thing to grow an economy without the necessary creation of employment. In this case we are going to ensure that as we grow the economy, it’s coupled with the creation of employment.

We accept the reality that is confronted with us currently, but we are confident that we are going to change this reality. We have got a plan; we have put that plan before the country -

the President has put that plan. We are going to follow that care to try and recover this economy - to try and get the country back into work again. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy President. The next supplementary question which was meant to be asked by the hon Gungubele will be taken by the hon Modise. That’s the mistake I made earlier on. Go ahead, ntate.

Mr P M P MODISE: Thank you very much Deputy Speaker. Dumela [Hello.] Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Dumela!

Mr P M P MODISE: Deputy President, noting the current socioeconomic conditions and the impact of coronavirus pandemic, what are the expected tangible outcomes from poverty alleviation programmes of government, and how will the reprioritisation of funds to support the implementation of the economic reconstruction and recovery plan make an impact to reduce poverty, to reduce unemployment and inequality, particularly for the poor and vulnerable masses people. Thank you very much, Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, the creation of jobs is right at the centre of the South African economic reconstruction and recovery plan to get our people back to their jobs, which they lost during the course of this pandemic. Government has committed almost R100 billion over the next three years to create jobs through public and social employment as the labour market recovers targeting of almost 800 000 employment opportunities that can be created over the medium-term period.

Regarding the process of reprioritising funds, government is utilising that process so that we can prioritise funds to infrastructure investment as a very important pillar that we are doing can boost our economic recovery. This can help us to fix the ailing infrastructure network industries while improving the country’s competitiveness and also creating opportunities for mass employment and skills development. So, we are going to lift the infrastructure investment as one priority that would help us restore our economy.

However, to accelerate the economic recovery and reconstruction, there is a need to name some reforms to address the underlying causes of low economic growth and high unemployment. To this end the President and National Treasury

is implementing the Operation Vulindlela. These structural reforms are intended to change the structure of our economy to reduce input costs, lower the barriers of entry and increase competition. Structural reforms will further lower costs and provide greater efficiency which will increase the competitiveness of the economy and create new opportunities for investments.

We have slowed down in terms of our investment drive because in every country, everyone is focusing on dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. But of course we continue to count on the investment that we have received and that is being implemented as we speak in the country. Although the process is very slow, we are hopeful that as we did with this COVID-19, we will be opening the way for these investments to be speeded up. So, besides investments it will be very difficult for this economy to recover. And as government we need to create very conducive environment for these investments to happen. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The third supplementary is by the hon Hill-Lewis.

Mr G G HILL-LEWIS: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker, I must say that is very interesting that the Deputy President Twitter account tweeted that answer to that follow up, even before it was asked.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: But you must mind your time, please.

Mr G G HILL-LEWIS: I know. As part of my question it is just

... [Interjections.] ... that must be deliberately going wrong. Any honest assessment of the government’s performance in combating poverty and getting people into jobs, we must accept that every single one of the big, major centralised service departments in government is in various state of collapse - Eskom, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, Prasa, SA Airways, SAA, Post Office, Home Affairs, Police, I could go on and on. Is it not time that the Deputy President and his government be honest about the fact that the ANC’s model of the developmental state is broken, and that those services should be devolved down to the lowest capable competent government that can actually deliver them. Thank you. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well, we still believe that whatever the challenges we are faced with as

government are challenges that we can deal with. The problems that are affecting all our state-owned enterprises, SOEs - we are dealing with those challenges. We have dealt with SAA, we are dealing with Eskom, dealing with Transnet, dealing with Denel, and there is increased capacity that we are putting in those SOE’s. And I am sure it will take some time to turn them around. I am confident that we are on the right track. It’s a question of time, of course, what did the compounding the situation is the advent of COVID-19. So the situation is looking more bleak because of COVID-19. Everything has been slowed down. But the work that is done currently by Minister Gordhan in the different state-owned enterprises, it is very good piece of work, that needs to be supported. And I am sure through time we are going to reap the benefits.

Now our work as government, I must admit, that has been affected by the COVID-19. We are not working as we are required. Most of the time, you can see even in this House, that we are talking through the hybrid model. We are connected virtually and we are not supposed to be in gatherings of more than 500 people out there. So, everything that we are doing is limited and it is constrained by the regulations so that we can avoid spreading COVID-19. That means as a country, and as the world, we are learning to leave with COVID-19 but continue

to work and continue to address our challenges. So everything is not really bleak. I think we will find our footing; we will be able to adapt to this the virus and be able to move a bit faster. Thank you very much.

Ms S A BUTHELEZI: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, what initiatives will government commit to over the next 24 months so as to encourage business growth with corporate social initiatives to reduce the triple threat of unemployment, poverty and inequality? Additionally, please outline what programmes are specifically designed to address the triple threat for youth, given that South Africa has the highest youth unemployment stands on the continent. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. We have presented our economic recovery plan, which focuses on a number of sectors. We are going to pursue that recovery plan. But as we pursue this recovery plan we are going to intervene where necessary to try and create employment - that is why the employment stimulus. So we should not look at the stimulus package as something that it is going to be a mainstay - the mainstay is the recovery plan. I have said we will prioritise infrastructure and we are doing very well. We have identified all those projects and currently we are working. These

projects are continuing on the ground. We are dealing with challenges that we are confronting on the ground, stoppages and all that, and we hope we are going to handle those projects.

But in the process, as we deal with the recovery plan, we are confident that some amount of jobs are going to be created and of course, the economy gradually will open up and allow more and more new entrances. And as we try to boost the economy, we are confident that new enterprises are going to stand up and come into action so that more and more people can be employed.

In this case we are counting on our small, medium and micro- sized enterprises, SMMEs, as the best platform where we can create more jobs and we can make them enter the economy. So we are confident that the recovery plan, if well implemented with a clear focus, we are going to gradually get out of this economic mould now. We are mindful of the pandemic. Of course, we are worried about the rise in infections, which might require some strict regulations so that it should not spread. So, it is important to call on all our people to really adhere to the protocols so that we do not get into the third wave that can further hurt our economy. So we must avoid it by adhering to the protocols, wearing masks, keeping the distance

and sanitise. So, it’s not going to be a difficult, I mean, easy journey to get out of this current situation. It is going to be a very tedious exercise. I am hopeful that day by day the amount of energy that we put in the reconstruction of our economy will finally see the light of the day. Thank you very much.

Question 12:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, the SA National Aids Council, Sanac, as a multisectoral structure that fosters dialogue and consensus between government, civil society, business and labour, has several governance structures, including the Programme Review Committee. This structure provides technical expertise and guidance on the programmatic activities of the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for HIV, tuberculosis, TB, and sexually transmitted infections, STIs**.**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sanac continues to receive regular updates on the implementation of COVID-19 programmes, as well as on the impact of COVID-19 on the TB and HIV programme. These updates have specifically been on the integration of HIV, TB and COVID-19 programmes, and most importantly, on the fast-tracking of HIV and TB catch-up plans

by provinces. These plans are being implemented by relevant government departments such as Health, Higher Education and Social Development to make up for HIV and TB client losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current practice at every health facility is to screen everyone who presents any ailment for TB symptoms. However, the recently released results of the TB prevalence survey showed us that symptom screening on its own has got a low sensitivity pick-up rate for TB cases. As a result, nonsymptomatic patients tend to be missed in the process.

To address this gap, we have introduced routine testing irrespective of symptoms for certain high-risk groups, people living with HIV, contacts of all people diagnosed with TB and people who have been previously tested for TB in the past years. This is what we refer to as active case finding which is done to make sure that the spread of the disease is minimised at community level.

The department is running a Welcome back to care campaign that has been activated nationwide in order to bring back all those who were on HIV and TB treatment but had treatment interruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This will ensure

that patients with TB continue with their medication until they are no longer infectious and indeed, until they are cured. For HIV-infected patients, getting back on medication will make their viral load suppressed which minimises the risk of viral transmission and the spread of the virus.

A lot of these services, including testing and screening, are being offered at community centres, away from hospitals, and patients are even able to collect medication at pharmacy lockers and their local retail pharmacy as part of government’s Central Chronic Medicine Dispensing and Distribution, CCMDD, programme, if such patients do not wish to visit health facilities.

Between June and September 2020, the Sanac Trust held a series of country dialogues with critical stakeholders to ensure that HIV, TB and STI responses was sustained and called for the dual testing of COVID-19 and TB. This led to resource mobilisation from both the *President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief*, Pepfar, and the Global Fund to invest in strengthening HIV and TB programming to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on our health system.

The Sanac Interministerial Committee has since approved the integration of HIV and Aids, TB and COVID-19 programmes, as well as the fast-tracking of HIV and Aids and TB catch-up plans in order to make up for HIV and Aids and TB client losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, considering the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the achievement of both national and global targets, the Sanac plenary resolved to extend the term of the current National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs, so that it ends in 2023 and not in 2022 as initially intended. This extension will allow Sanac sectors some time to implement catch-up plans that are aimed at accelerating the provision of services towards the attainment of the set targets.

While we have surpassed the target with respect to the percentage of people knowing their HIV status, more efforts are still required with respect to enrolling people on antiretroviral treatment and ensuring that they are virally suppressed. Even more efforts are required to help us meet our 90-90-90 targets for TB.

To this end, we have met with civil society to discuss these challenges and agreed to continue working together to address

the identified shortfalls. The civil society sector of Sanac responded swiftly to support the country’s health system by collaborating with other civil society formations to establish the Community Constituency COVID-19 Front within the National

Economic Development and Labour Council, Nedlac.

This initiative entails an integrated response to COVID-19, HIV and TB using technology, with a particular focus on advocacy, social mobilisation, public awareness, legal support and the promotion of human rights, as well as contact tracing and screening.

Community health workers also continue to provide a vital service in support of the country’s health system, by reaching out to patients and community members who require health care assistance. This includes conducting household visits to monitor HIV and TB patients, and ensuring that they do not default on their treatment.

We want to commend all civil society formations and community health care workers for their hard work and commitment in supporting our health system. We also take this time to encourage everyone to come on board and work together to ensure that we achieve the targets that we have set for

ourselves for HIV/Aids and TB screening and testing. We call upon our communities to come out to screen and test to ensure that they receive the necessary assistance through our facilities. We must also take responsibility for our own health.

As we continue our efforts of the vaccination roll-out, we continue to appeal to all of us to continue to observe COVID-

19 protocols and employ all nonpharmaceutical interventions and behavioural change to stem off further infections as we confront the new wave of infections. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Deputy President. Ntate Seabi? Hon A M Seabi. I don’t know why I’m assuming. [Inaudible.] No, I’m right, sorry. Go ahead ntate. [Interjections.] Order Chief Whip, order. Go ahead, ntate.

Mr A M SEABI: Order sustained. Once more thank you Deputy Speaker and good afternoon to the Deputy President. Thank you Deputy President, for the comprehensive response which is highly informative. Deputy President, the experience we are taking home from the advent of this pandemic COVID-19 is that

as a society we are adapting to the changing world where we are now continuing with our lives doing things online.

We also see government coming on board with the introduction

of systems such as Electronic Vaccination Data and COVID Alert

SA as a way of enabling people to continue registering online for inoculation.

My question is as follows. How is government planning to

expand such systems in the fight against TB and HIV and Aids to continue encouraging people to screen and test?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. You stayed within your timeframe, ntate. Deputy President?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Correctly, government is taking up the

challenge. For instance, the Department of Health has already introduced a mobile application for screening and reporting on

all the expanded screening activities. For example, patients are now able to collect their medication at pharmacy locus as part of the CCMDD programme.

The Department of Social Development has developed a phone application to provide support to teenagers and young adults

to overcome social and behavioural drivers of HIV. Community- based measures have also been developed by Sanac to respond to COVID-19, HIV and TB, using technology named Thusa Sechaba, which allows for the identification of issues as well as

responses at a household level.

In addition, civil society has also developed a multifaceted

digital response system called the communication master — a web-based based platform, which includes behaviour change,

communication, access to services, testing, nonpharmaceutical methods for prevention, as well as personal and respiratory

hygiene. These are some of the technological advances that we

have created as government and we will continue to adapt as we move on. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

Ms E R WILSON: Deputy President, only 3,5 million South Africans have been registered on the chronic medicines and dispensing system. However, we know that there are in excess of 7,5 million HIV and Aids patients in South Africa requiring care and this does not include those with heart conditions, diabetes and other conditions which require monthly life- saving medication. The chronic medicine dispensing system is therefore planning and ensuring that adequate supplies of life-saving drugs are available at the right facilities and

that appropriate care is available at all times. Instead, the sick and vulnerable find themselves travelling at cost and queuing at facilities day after day, week after week, sometimes month after month, because the medicines critical to their survival is not available.

Deputy President, what are you going to do to ensure that this is sorted out and that these people get the required care in terms of the Constitution?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Wilson, can I give you unsolicited advice? When you leave your question to the last minute, you go over the boundary of your time allocation and it’s not nice for me to have to tell you to stop. In future, can’t you start with your question and then motivate it? I don’t have to get involved in the contents. I’m just talking about time allocation. I want to have my conscience clean when I stop you

... chop your time off as allocated to you.

All members, in future please think about that. Start with your question and then you can say whatever else you want to say, of course within the Rules, with respect. I really respect the time you are allocated. Deputy President, please go ahead.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The hon member is correct and I said in the beginning that the Sanac plenary adopted a catch-up plan precisely because of the realisation that we have lost a lot of time. We have switched our focus, paid more attention to COVID-19 and somewhere we relegated HIV and TB to the background.

We are now launching this catch-up plan to say we are going to find the missing HIV people that were taking our medication and the missing TB people that were taking our medication. We are utilising our home-based care that is rooted in our communities, to find these patients so that we can re-enrol them to our chronic medication scheme. So, we are on track. We have realised that and we accept the fact that we have lost a bit of time. That is why we are extending the implementation of the National Strategic Plan and we are allowing the catch- up plan to take place so that we catch up on all the people that we’ve lost ... the people that are missing out there. I am sure we are going to find those people and enrol them in our chronic medication system. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Deputy President. Hon Ndlozi?

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: It’s me Deputy Speaker. I was going to take the question. It’s Mkhaliphi.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, go ahead hon Mkhaliphi.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. Deputy President, what short to medium term actions will you be

taking to address the dramatic collapse of public health services in the country and in the Eastern Cape in particular,

because long before COVID-19 the public health system was in a deep crisis in this country, struggling to cater for the vast

majority of people who depend on public health services.

During the pandemic we have seen a total collapse of the

system across the nation but more specifically in the Eastern Cape. The elderly people are subjected to long queues at the

clinics for the whole day. There is no medication, nurses and doctors are overworked and there are no ambulances. Almost

everything has totally collapsed. So, what short to medium actions are you going to take to address this pandemic on its own?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Well, the situation as you explained it in the Eastern Cape ... I think we will try and investigate

it. The Minister of Health has been there several times to try and work with the provincial leadership so that our people get assisted there.

However, I beg to differ with the hon member in terms of the

collapse of the health system. I think by and large our health system has carried us up to this far. We have gone through the

first wave of the pandemic. We have gone through the second wave. ... difficult, but the health system stood the test of

time. I mean, you are a witness that all over the country, provinces were busy erecting temporary structures, putting

additional beds. We have confronted the pandemic and I can say

we have succeeded. However, in the process there are casualties. We have lost some of our people. The health system

has tried. That is why we sought to ... [Inaudible.] ... some of our programmes, like our HIV programme, our TB programme,

and we focused on the COVID-19 pandemic.

To be fair enough, if I assessed our health system, it has done relatively well. We continue to experience problems. COVID-19 is still with us. Of course, pandemics like HIV and TB are still with us. Therefore, our health system is still under pressure. We must continue to assist wherever we can and I am sure that Sanac, Social Development, the Department of

Health, the Interministerial Committee on HIV and Aids, Sanac, all of us are going to put ... our hands and assist the Department of Health ... the system not to collapse.

So far, we have done very well as a country and we want to

thank Cabinet for the support that has been given to the department, and the financial support in terms of buying PPE,

buying the necessary medication and supporting the screening and tracing process. All those programmes wanted money and our

government made it possible that all this happened. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Deputy President. Hon Meshoe?

Mr S N SWART: Deputy Speaker, with your permission I’ll take

the follow up.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, go ahead.

Mr S N SWART: Thank you for the response. I will start with the question, and that is, what role can civil society play more in assisting the catch-up programme, and in particular the religious community?

Let’s just analyse. The Home Affairs Department recorded

443 551 natural deaths for the whole of 2020. Of that, 28 46

... [Inaudible] ... were tragically COVID-19 related. That means 415 000 people died of other natural causes - Aids, TB. That is, 1 000 per day for a year. You admit that we can do better and I would ask whether the religious sector and civil society can assist in this regard. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. You even repeated it. Great, hon Swart. Deputy President?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker,

for the very good question of what we can do to help. Well, firstly, to help the catch-up programme, the challenges that

there are ... missing a number of people that are out there in our communities who have got TB. The task for us is to go out

there and find those people. Find these people, introduce them to treatment and ensure that they take their treatment until

they recover.

Secondly, we must go out there and find the missing HIV affected people. We have got a number of people that have not taken their medication for quite some time. We must find these

people and reintroduce them to the system, give them medication and ensure that we suppress their viral load.

Now, that is the additional work that we must do. Go out

there, screen, test, test for TB, test for HIV and Aids. Those

who have abandoned their medication ... reintroduce them to their medication, ensure that they take their medication until

there are healed, and ensure that they take their medication continuously and they do not default.

Well, with regard to COVID-19, there are trained medical

practitioners that will continue to do the screening and to do

the testing but with TB and HIV and Aids, if there is home- based care that has been trained to screen and test those

people, they will be out there. So, if there are those people that are willing to help, we can introduce these people to the

Department of Health so that they are guided on how best to help.

This is how far we want to take the catch-up plan, so that we do not leave this ailment ... this pandemic behind – HIV and Aids and TB. Thank you very much.

The House adjourned at 17:27.