**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

**FRIDAY, 11 JUNE 2021**

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVIINCES***

The Council met at 10:03.

The House Chairperson: Committees and Oversight took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

The House Chairperson announced that the virtual sitting constituted a Sitting of the National Council of Provinces.

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE

(Draft Resolution)

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP: Hon Chairperson, I move

That the Council –

notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 17(1) of the Rules of the National Council of Provinces, grants hon MO Mokause leave of absence from proceedings of both the Council and committees of the Council in terms of Rule 17(2) until the hon member is ready to resume her duties.

IN FAVOUR: Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and Western Cape.

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

# APPROPRIATION BILL

(Policy Debate)

Vote No 5 – Home Affairs:

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon House Chair, my colleague Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Njabulo Nzuza, chairperson of the Select Committee on Security and Justice hon Shahidabibi Shaikh, hon members of the select committee, hon members of the National Council of Provinces, chairperson of

the Independent Electoral Commission Mr Glen Mashinini and the entire commission members, Director-General of the Department of Home Affairs Mr Tommy Makhode and his team, Acting Commissioner of the Border Management Authority Mr Gene Ravele and his team, Acting CEO of the Government Printing Works Ms Alinah Fosi and her team, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen, good morning to you all and thank you for the honour of allowing me to address this House on the key priorities of the Department of Home Affairs in enabling the country to function.

Hon members, this year marks 45 years since the June 16 student uprisings. We continue to celebrate the legacy and principles of selflessness, determination and devotion required for success and growth for our society as we continue with our economic reconstruction and recovery. This year, youth month takes place in a year in which we celebrating the

150 anniversary of Mama Charlotte Maxeke who, in her younger days, taught fundamentals of indigenous languages and basic English to expatriates in Kimberley before becoming the first black South African woman to graduate with a university degree. Her life exemplifies compassion for others and continuous learning, values that we embrace as we build a more caring Home Affairs department.

In line with theme for youth month, “The Year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke: Growing youth employment for an inclusive and transformed society”, the Department of Home Affairs, will be visiting next week schools and elderly citizens in Fondwe Village, Nzhelele in Limpopo, to process applications for smart identity cards.

The Department of Home Affairs interacts and influences the lives of South Africans from birth, to marriage, to acquiring a passport for international travel and recording death. All of these are fundamental rights as we celebrate 25 years of our Constitution. Sadly, some people have unpleasant experiences when they visit Home Affairs offices to access these fundamental rights. Quite often, people make time to come to our offices only to be met with a message that our systems are offline. This is very painful and frustrating for us as much as it is to the public. Perhaps I should explain that as Home Affairs sought to make the lives of citizens easier by embracing technology, we modernised some of our services such that we should not offer some services manually in order to ensure enhanced security. An example of this is the application for smart Id cards. The use of technology has enabled us to take photos electronically and deliver the ID within 13 working days compared to the six months it used to

take in the past. Unfortunately, when the system is offline this sophisticated cannot be offered.

Another problem we have tends to be the telecommunications link between our front offices and our databases. This can be caused by cable theft because most of the Telkom datalines are still using the lucrative copper cables. However, things are slowly changing in the urban areas with installation of fibre optic and usage of 3G and 4G wireless connection.

We have also rolled-out 100 mobile trucks to enable us to take Home Affairs services to the people. We have been having a paradoxical situation with this programme because the 3G connection that is used in these trucks is dependent on available telecommunications networks. Hence, while rural areas are badly in need of the mobile trucks, they are also mostly struggling with networks while urban areas which are not much in need of these trucks as much as rural areas, have good networks reception that also enables them to benefit from the trucks.

We are now moving into a very small aperture terminal, VSAT, satellite solution. Today, we have five teams testing the system at the Gert Sibande District Municipality in

Mpumalanga. Three teams are at Evander, one at Kinross and another one at Embalenhle. The teams have already tested the system in the Nkangala District Municipality in Mpumalanga. This team is scheduled to test the system in Sekhukhune District of Limpopo from 20 to 24 June this year. The teams have concluded tests in the Northern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu- Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape and the results of the system performance are quite encouraging.

Ordinarily, we have a capacity to issue three million smart ID cards per annum, but due to Covid-19, in the financial year 2020-21 we could only issue 1,2 million smart ID cards. It is still a good performance considering that some of the services were temporarily unavailable in some lockdown levels.

Hon House Chair, one of the sore thumbs for the Department of Home Affairs are the snaking queues at our offices. This is mostly because Home Affairs offices are not custom-built. Some are on the main streets with no parking for the public. This situation, together with systems that are often offline, is responsible for these long snaking queues in the department.

As part of our modernisation project, we have started building Home Affairs offices that are ideal to provide a service to

members of the public. Earlier this year, I met Eastern Cape Premier Mr Oscar Mabuyane to look at how we can collaborate to solve this challenge. The challenges in the Eastern Cape were pronounced around East London and Mthatha offices. We agreed to establish a rapid response team to resolve some of these challenges. One of the successes of this team is that the province has provided some Expanded Public Works Programme workers to manage queues. The office plan for the East London has been reconfigured to allow more people to wait for services inside. The nearby office in Mdantsane has been installed with live capture system to enable it to take applications for smart ID cards and passports. This means that people in Mdantsane don’t have to travel to East London to apply for smart ID cards and passports as they use to do in the past.

A review of the Mthatha office has established that the office has to be relocated. The department is engaging stakeholders in this regard. We have seen the importance of giving people options of more offices to visit. As such, 12 offices in the Eastern Cape province have been identified for refurbishments. Most of these offices can be used as alternatives to the East London and Mthatha offices. The office in Lusikisiki was relocated in March 2021. It is a modern and purpose-built

office with ample waiting area and parking, built at a cost of R64 million within budget and created 113 jobs during construction. Similar purpose-built offices are in different phases of construction in different parts of the country. For an example, in Mokopane R39 million office with 39 jobs.

Thohoyandou, R38 million office with 33 jobs created, in Taung in the North-West, R33 million with 22 jobs. These projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2021.

This means we will be able to provide services to our clients efficiently in modern offices. We are anticipating to open these offices at the beginning of 2022.

Hon members, we are also working with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR, to help identify locations where we should be putting new offices based on considerations such as population density and movement of people. This scientific determination of the location of our new offices diverting Home Affairs traffic to nearby offices and the roll-out of mobile offices will help us to reduce queues at our offices. We will apply the good lessons we have learnt in the Eastern Cape in other provinces.

We are also working with the banks to increase our footprint, whereby some clients will not have to visit Home Affairs

offices, but obtain the same service through an online system within the banks. In this financial year we will finalise the memoranda of understanding with banks to enable us to roll-out to more branches.

Our efforts to enforce immigration laws at the land ports of entry along the borderline and in the country rests on incrementally implementing the Border Management Authority, BMA, and the continuous partnership with other law enforcement agencies. I wish to thank this hon House for helping to unlock the Border Management Authority Bill which was stuck here for more than three years. The Border Management Authority Bill will incorporate staff from frontline immigration, port health, border facility management and agriculture functions and employ border patrol Guards. The department will make a substantial budget of R120 million for this purpose. Last year it was only R28 million. This allocation will help us to roll- out the be used for operationalising the BMA and also hire border patrol guards.

Chairperson, citizens now have 19 days to submit written comments on the Green Paper on Marriages in South Africa. This topic has received a lot of coverage. Unfortunately, based on a single issue contained in the Green Paper, the issue called

polyandry. I must state that the Green Paper is about much more than just that. It is beyond any dispute that this country needs a modern marriage policy based on three of the pillars of our Constitution, that is equality, nondiscrimination and human dignity. At the present moment to get married in South Africa, you have to choose between three acts of Parliament, namely, Marriage Act, Act 25 of 1961, Recognition of Customary Marriage Act, Act 120 of 1998 and Civil Union Act, Act 17 of 2006, which provides for same sex marriages. These three Acts have many gaps, omissions and weaknesses. The three Acts, for instance, do not cater recognition to Muslim marriages, Hindu marriages and marriages conducted under the Jewish rites. Despite the enactment of Recognition of Customary Marriage Act by this very Parliament, traditional marriages taking place in many royal families, in terms of their traditions and rituals, are still not in the statute books. We do not have a law, for instance, which preventing minor children from getting married. So we have marriages of girl below the age of 18 and a boy below the age of 17 years as long as their parents sign a consentan, and this cannot be correct.

Twenty-seven years after democracy, if people want to get married they still have to go to a minister of the Department

of Home affairs official. But what about other social groups? Why can’t a person in a far rural area go to “moshate” [traditional leader] or “musanda” [traditional leader] to have their marriage officially solemnised by a traditional leader, king or queen or any member of the royal family who is trained and certified by Home Affairs for such purposes? Why should we remain with a situation where other religious leaders cannot perform marriages according to their religious rituals?

It is because of the realities I have outlined above, which by the way are by no means exhaustive, that the department was prompted into action to start a discussion about how marriage policies in the country should look like.

We started with ministerial dialogues throughout the country, starting in August 2019. We recorded everything that stakeholders told us and We put out these proposals in the Green Paper. Yesterday, the department finalised the last provincial engagement with stakeholders in Gauteng, Limpopo and North West provinces. Stakeholders in other provinces have already been consulted. On Monday, the department will be consulting traditional leaders and a day later it will be consulting religious leaders.

Right at the beginning of the Green Paper the following words appear, and I quote:

The Green Paper is not the official policy position of government. It only articulates possible policy options or proposals that are based on inputs received from stakeholders. These proposals will be subjected to public scrutiny.

The Oxford English dictionary definition of a Green Paper is, I quote:

Preliminary report of government proposals published to stimulate discussion. Crucially, a Green Paper contains no commitment to action, it is more of a tool of stimulating discussion.

On the other hand, a White Paper is issued by government as a statement of policy and proposals. In short, Green Paper means consultation and White Paper means proposals and there and there should be no confusing about it. I am pleading that the national dialogue on this Green Paper be conducted responsibly and in the true spirit of nation building. We are eagerly waiting for inputs by 30 June.

Chairperson, the Independent Electoral Commission is continuing with preparations for the 2021 fifth local government elections. The Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, has announced that the national voter registration weekend will be held on 17 to 18 July 2021. In our quest to have free and fair elections, which is our constitutional standard, I am happy to announce that the IEC has recently concluded the process to procure 40 000 new voter management devices, VMDs, which will be delivered and deployed in time for the nationwide voter registration. The device will provide vital election day applications including access to a real- time version of the certified voters’ roll. Chairperson, in simple language, with this device, which will replace the old zip-zap machines, there is going to be no possibility of anybody ever voting twice. I just want to emphasise that.

As you may be aware, the Constitutional Court on the 20 July 2020 passed a judgement that compels the country to allow independent candidates to contest for provincial and national elections. I have appointed a team led by former government Minister, Mr Valli Moosa, who concluded public consultations with political parties and organisations representing nonpolitical youths. I am advised that this committee has

Hon members, government Printing Works is one of the shining lights amongst state entities. It is an entity which prints high security documents such as ID documents, passports, exam papers and gun licenses. It is self-financing, has recently invested in machinery, has an artisan and graduate skills development programme focusing on the youth and women and is able to have surpluses despite not receiving a cent from the National Treasury. Even during Covid-19, the Government Printing Works is still able to financially sound. Your provinces can be part of this story of success in building state capacity. Already, some provinces are part of this journey of the, Government Printing Works, GPW, building capacity for the state. The Government Printing Works prints all identity documents and passports for the Department of Home Affairs. It also prints the examination papers for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, colleges. This project demonstrates GPW’s versatility and the adaptability of its printing presses.

It is also printing matric exam papers for the Limpopo and the North West provinces. It has the capacity to print for other provinces, if such province come forward and are willing to join. the Government Printing Work also prints gazettes which

enable government and the private sector, especially the legal fraternity, to function.

Sadly, the Government Printing Work experienced a system down- time where the data centre was hit by a power surge that damaged critical hardware earlier this year. The facts at our disposal suggests that this might not have been an accident.

And for this reason, I have since appointed a tribunal to look into issues at the GPW, and I will be making an announcement on this matter in due course on this matter.

On the issue corruption our efforts of fighting corruption are bolstered by the many whistle-blowers who have come forward with valuable information. We want to thank them and to encourage them to continue to do so because we don’t want any corner of Home Affairs to be saddled with issues of corruption. As we root out maladministration and corruption, we will strive to root out all those who continue to tarnish our image and reputation this country.

I set up a ministerial task team that is reviewing all permits and visas issued by Home Affairs since 2004. The year 2004 is the year in which the Immigration Act came into effect in this country. The following permits are under these categories are

under review and scrutiny by this team, namely, permanent residence permits, which are just a step away from citizenship, corporate visas, especially in the mining sector, business visa, professional or critical skills visa, retired persons visas, citizenship by naturalisation and study visa.

All these are being reviewed. The team is led by former Presidency Director General Dr Cassius Lubisi and it has done some commendable work and is also ready to engage on its preliminary report before the end of this month.

Allow me to thank my colleague, the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Njabulo Nzuza, the director general, Mr Tommy Makhode, the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs, the chairperson of the IEC, the Acting CEO of Government Printing Works and the Acting Commissioner of the Border Management Authority and all stakeholders for having worked together to navigate the new normal. I wish to present a budget of R8,6 billion for the consideration of This house. Thank you very much.

Ms S SHAIKH: Greetings, hon Chairperson, Minister and deputy Minister of Home Affairs, hon Members of the House and fellow South Africans.

This year marks 150 years since the birth of an extraordinary woman who became famous for being the mother of Black Freedom in South Africa, our stalwart, Mama Charlotte Maxeke.

In her research, author Zubeida Jaffer described Mama Charlotte as follows:

Maxeke rolled up her sleeves and got to work. She made up her own mind about where to focus her energies. She chased her dreams and came into her own – defying the architects of both colonisation and apartheid. Hers was a triumphant spirit that powered on in spite of the multitude of odds stacked against her. It is the courage and strength of the women of the time, Maxeke and many others, which is the focal point, as well as the history of resistance by black women.

All South Africans are dependent on the Department of Home Affairs because its sole mandate is to secure and manage the official identity and status of persons. The services of the Department of Home Affairs is divided into two broad categories: Civic Services and Immigration Services. The Department of Home Affairs is mandated to manage citizenship

and civic status, international migration, refugee protection and the population register.

The Department of Home Affairs is the key enabler of national security, citizen empowerment, efficient administration and socio-economic development. These functions must be managed securely and strategically.

A major focus of the National Development Plan, NDP, is to confront the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The Department of Home Affairs has a critical contribution to make to the achievement of the NDP 2030 objectives in the following manner: The inclusion of all citizens in democracy and development is enabled by providing them with a status and an identity that gives them access to rights and services. It should facilitate the acquisition of the critical skills needed for economic growth as determined by the Department of Higher Education and Training to build its own skills base. It should drive integrated and co- ordinated border management to ensure the borders are effectively protected, secured and well-managed. Lastly, the modernisation programme of the Department of Home Affairs can reduce fraud and the cost of doing business by enabling e-

government which will attract more investment into the country.

As the ANC, we view the Department of Home Affairs as a core security cluster department that should be adequately resourced to enable it to achieve its vision of a modern and secure department, with adequate policies and legislation that give effect to its full mandate on the management of identity and international migration in order to ensure national service delivery, economic development and security goals.

In order to reposition the Department of Home Affairs as a modern, secure department which provides our nation with a powerful tool for economic and social transformation, the Department of Home Affairs Bill becomes critical. This Bill is intended to be the anchor legislation aimed at providing a coherent legal framework for a repositioned Department of Home Affairs to deliver on a mandate appropriate for a sovereign state that has a constitution founded on democracy, inclusion, social justice, development, peace and security.

Furthermore, the Identity Management Framework is needed to address how the Department of Home Affairs will regulate the manner in which personal information will be processed by

establishing conditions that meet the minimum threshold requirement for lawful processing of personal information.

The ministerial priorities include the establishment of an effective Border Management Authority, the upgrade of six land ports of entry, the war on queues, and the completion of the modernisation programme.

The ANC’s 54th National Conference reaffirmed the thrust of the mandate as outlined in the National Development Plan of 2030 that:

South Africa’s borders are effectively safeguarded, secured and well-managed.

The conference resolved that the Border Management Authority Bill must be expedited and implemented in order to address the question of irregular migration and border management.

The ANC-led government took a decision to establish a Border Management Authority, BMA, to take responsibility for all functions related to the management of our borders. The Authority will be responsible for border law enforcement functions at ports of entry and at the borderline. The BMA

will ensure the efficient processing of goods at the country’s ports of entry. It will strengthen our capacity to address border threats that could undermine the country’s security and social and economic development.

The Select Committee on Security and Justice engaged at length on the complexities of this Bill, which was passed in the National Assembly in 2020. The Border Management Authority Act, Act 2 of 2020 has since come into effect on

1 January 2021. We welcome the fact that the Department of Home Affairs will incrementally implement the Border Management Authority during the Medium-term Expenditure Framework.

The BMA’s budget has been doubled from R20 million in the previous financial year to R40 million for the 2021-22 financial year. An amount of R124,9 million has also been set aside over the Medium-term Expenditure Framework period.

It will be important for the department to strictly adhere to the BMA implementation plan in order to ensure that the BMA is implemented within the stipulated timeframes.

Furthermore, appropriate legal mechanisms must be put in place at border posts to address illegal border crossings from neighbouring countries and the department should continue its working relationship with the SA National Defence Force, SANDF, to ensure that the border posts are sufficiently protected.

While the law enforcement operations function of the department is of the utmost importance in curbing illegal migration, there are capacity and resource constraints within this function. Despite these constraints, the Department should strengthen its co-operative working relationships with law enforcement agencies to ensure that the law enforcement operations are not compromised.

In line with the implementation of the BMA, the Department of Home Affairs plans to redevelop and modernise six priority land ports of entry in the form of the One-Stop Border Post concept. The priority borders are Beitbridge, Maseru Bridge, Kopfontein, Lebombo, Oshoek and Ficksburg. An amount of

R1,8 billion has been set aside to ensure related activities are carried out to complete this project over the medium term.

We are glad that the war on queues is a ministerial priority. In this regard the Minister has already alluded to the frustrations of citizens in his regard and the challenges within the department.

The increased focus on technology will be central for the Department of Home Affairs going forward as well as the need to speed up the modernisation programme. The department is investigating the use of contactless equipment to further ensure the health of clients and staff.

There is a need for the department to be adaptable and flexible in service delivery. Key considerations include the working of shift systems and flexitime, remote working arrangements for the majority of business areas, and the review of specific business processes such as permitting. In addition, tools of trade must be provided to staff to ensure uninterrupted service delivery.

The department will continue with the modernisation project of its IT systems. The department has been able to automate its business processes and products. Most significantly, this has made capturing information and images, digitising supporting documents, and issuing enabling documents more efficient. The

department will continue with the modernisation programme and has allocated R3 billion over the MTEF.

The department has continued to prioritise the timeous issuing of permits and visas. The timeous issuing of permits and visas enables economic growth and removes impediments to foreign investment. The department plans to continue implementing the visa simplification process, through which certain low‐risk countries will benefit from visa waivers and relaxed conditions and rolling out electronic visas.

For the 2021-22 financial year, the department receives an allocation of R8,7 billion compared to the R8,8 billion special adjusted allocations of 2020-21. The adjusted budget includes revenue generated through the issuance of civil documents. Despite the decline in budget, the department’s responsibilities keep increasing when considering the BMA, One-Stop-Border-Post and modernisation of its IT infrastructure. However, its budget has decreased in real terms for the past three financial years.

In terms of economic classification, the Vote’s main cost

drivers are the compensation of employees. Despite the budget

cuts in respect of compensation of employees, the department must ensure that critical vacant posts are filled as a matter of urgency and that the current vacancies in provincial offices should not compromise service delivery.

The department must address fraud and corruption both within the department and at the border posts. Consequence management should be implemented to address the challenges related to fraud and corruption.

The Citizen Affairs Programme has a specific budget allocation of R2,024 billion for service delivery to provinces. The highest allocations are made to the following three provinces: Gauteng reflects an amount of R458 522 million, followed by the Eastern Cape with R269 799 million, and KwaZulu-Natal with R255 658 million.

The department has indicated that the allocations to provinces are moving towards zero-based budgeting. Most provinces are experiencing a slight reduction in respect of compensation of employees and salary increases which National Treasury has removed from the budget.

All provinces have each of the following 8 targets: birth registration within 30 days; Smart ID cards issued to citizens

16 years of age and older; 100% of detected employers in contravention of the Immigration Act charged; 100% of detected transgressors in contravention of the Immigration Act charged; 100% of direct deportations concluded within 30 calendar days; 100% of transfers to Lindela concluded within 20 calendar days; 80% of detected fraudulent marriages and marriage-of- convenience cases finalised within 60 days; and 100% of valid invoices settled within 30 days of verification.

The department reported that, out of the eight annual targets, seven were achieved. This translates to an 87,5% target achievement for the 2020-21 financial year.

The department has published a Green Paper on Marriages for public engagement. The Green Paper seeks to work towards the development of a new Single Marriage Bill, and it also aligns the marriage regime with the constitutional principle of equality. The paper makes proposals on unions of people from all sexual orientations, religious and cultural persuasions. Once enacted, the new Single Marriage Act will enable South Africans of different sexual orientation, religious and cultural persuasions to conclude legal marriages that will

accord with the principle of equality, non-discrimination and human dignity as encapsulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The department should ensure that it engages extensively with all communities in respect of the Marriage Policy in order for all views to be captured in crafting the legislation.

In light of the upcoming local government elections, the department should roll out sufficient awareness-raising campaigns to ensure that all citizens receive their ID documents timeously so as to enable them to register and vote during the 2021 local government elections.

The department’s partnership with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, to address the backlogs that exist within the asylum application process is encouraging. The department should continue with this initiative to ensure that asylum applications are processed expeditiously so as to improve public confidence in the department.

In closing, I end off with the words of Mama Maxeke:

This work is not for yourselves – kill the spirit of “self” and do not live above your people but live with them.

The African National Congress supports this Budget Vote. Thank you.

Mr I M SILEKU: Hon House Chair, hon Chair, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, hon members of the NCOP, Special Delegates and fellow South Africans, for many decades the ANC blamed bad service delivery on apartheid. Well, actually they blamed all their failures, in terms of exercising the mandate they received to govern this country, on all and everything but themselves. This is also the case with the many failures of the national Department of Home Affairs.

Yes, apartheid was horrible. But, over time people started to understand that apartheid cannot be blamed particularly for bad governance and inadequate service delivery since the democratisation of South Africa. Every day we here about people lining up in long queues at the offices of Home Affairs around the country, in attempts to register new births, obtain ID’s, obtain visas and other services only to be ignored and humiliated.

We the people can understand if this was an isolated case at specific branches but it’s evident that this is a systemic problem we face. I am aware of elderly people who go to the department’s offices as early as five o’clock in the morning. They sit there in adverse weather conditions and without food just to be informed, at the end of the work day, that they will not be helped and that they must return the next day.

Minister, the blame for this can surely not be directed to any other person or entity than you and your administration, and can surely not be blamed on apartheid. One often wonders what the focusses of the officials of the department are.

Then we read newspaper headings such as “Home Affairs welcomes arrest of three corrupt officials”, “Home Affairs official arrested for selling birth certificates”, “3 Limpopo Home Affairs officials nabbed for alleged corruption.” Is this where the focus, lies Minister? And if it is, how can you allow this to be the case? The good people of this land started to see the dramatic adverse effects of state capture, corruption of epic proportions and cadre deployment as the reasons for systemically failed governance.

Every person in this country knows that the ANC became the biggest threat to good governance, and that they are incapable to provide the type of national government services that the people of South Africa deserves. When the ANC talks about bad and failed governance they talk in the third person and as observers. They talk in a way that distances them from the very problems they created. When they talk about unprecedented unemployment levels of 32.6% and poverty, they seem to be surprised as if they are neither aware of this, nor responsible for it.

Minister, when you boast about your department’s achievements or when you underplay its failures you must surely be living in denial. I would have appreciated it, if the Minister of Home Affairs came out and acknowledge the problems he and his predecessors caused in the department. Instead of honesty, and with apartheid being a lame excuse these days, the Minister and his many colleagues, that govern the massive bureaucracy, created by the President, found another culprit to blame for poor performances.

The new scapegoat for bad governance and poor service delivery is the Covid-19 Pandemic. The reality is that failed governance, poor service delivery, adverse social order and

crippling economy had been blasting devastation through our nation long before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. But alas the ANC has struck tenderpreneurial gold and will be milking the Covid-19 pandemic excuse for years to come.

I note the department’s underspending of R315 million relates to vacancies and savings on information and modernisation systems. The crux of complying with our single most important goal, Batho Pele: The People First, is affected by a lack of capacities in the department. That lack of capacities results in the humiliating and dehumanised service delivery to our people at the network of home affairs offices.

What is needed is for the department, as underpinned by National Development Plan, NDP is to become internally developmental. That is what the DA does where it governs and, given the opportunity, will also do in Home Affairs. To be developmental, the department needs a core of employees fit for purpose and equipped with the best technology this country can afford. And ironically, that is where the department fails to spend its budget.

The department’s appropriation for 2021-22 refers to

government’s dire fiscal constraints and the influence it has

on the department. It requests Parliament to consider mitigating measures to the risks resulting from budget cuts.

I believe the department is underfunded. I also believe that the department is not utilising the funds it has in a Batho Pele context.

Money cannot buy integrity. Money is not needed to enhance the good liberal values of putting the interest and dignity of our people first. And if the Minister and his department do not know how to change their ways, they are always welcome to approach the DA to share with them the recipe of good and clean governance. The DA will guide them to govern as the Western Cape is being governed. I thank you.

*IsiXhosa:*

Enkosi kakhulu.

Ms N E NKOSI: Chairperson, greetings to the Minister, Deputy Minister and members of the NCOP,

We, the African people in the Union of South Africa, urgently demand the granting of full citizenship rights such

as are enjoyed by all Europeans in South Africa. We demand:

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1. Abolition of the political discrimination based on race such as the Cape “Native” franchise Representative and Native Representative Council, under the Representation of Natives Act and the extension to all adults regardless of race of the right to vote and be elected to Parliament, provincial councils and other representative institutions.
2. The right to equal justice in courts of law including nominations to juries and appointment as judges, magistrates and other court officials.

Those are the words which were echoed by the 1943 African Claim’s document. That is the document which significantly influenced our internationally acclaimed final Constitution.

The issue of franchise has always been at the core of the struggle in our country. For the first time in the history of South Africa, the interim Constitution guaranteed the right to vote. The final Constitution sets the rules of how the three

spheres of government works, which are the national, provincial and local government.

The citizens of South Africa have the right to choose the government of their choice through elections. Section 19(3) of the Bill of Rights states that every adult citizen has the right to vote in the election for any legislative body established in terms of the Constitution and shall do so in a secret ballot.

It is the ANC which declared that people shall govern and we declare that sovereignty vests in the people of South Africa and that their will shall be expressed by the democratically elected representatives in a periodic free and fair elections. These elected representatives will adopt a Constitution which shall be the highest law of the land guaranteeing the basic rights.

The ANC declared that the Bill of Rights will guarantee that South Africa is a multiparty democracy. In this regard, the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, is critical. Section

190 of the Constitution spells out that and I quote:

The IEC must manage the elections in the national, provincial and municipal legislative bodies in accordance with the national legislation. Ensure that those elections are free and fair and declare the results of the elections within a period that must be prescribed by the national legislation as short as reasonably possible.

The IEC received its budget allocation for Budget Vote 5 on Home Affairs in 2019. The IEC delivered yet another free and fair general elections, marking the 10th successful general elections, five national and provincial elections and five local government elections since the dawn of our democracy in 1994. Among the highlights of that particular election include, firstly, the largest number of voters were registered, 26,6 million compared to 25,4 million in 2014.

Secondly, 2019 saw the largest number of contesting parties,

78 compared to 45 in 2014.

The largest number of special votes were granted, 775 291, and cast 570 674, translating into a turnout of 73% for special votes. We saw the largest number of voting stations, 22 924.

The lowest number yet of spoiled ballots 1,27% as opposed to 1,29% in 2014. The highest percentage of women were elected to the NA 45,25% as opposed to 42% in 2014. While the voter

turnout declined from previous elections, these highlights are indicative of our vibrant democracy. The work of the IEC is indeed appreciated.

We have seen devastating effects of elections which are not free and fair in other countries and we do not wish to see this in our beloved country. The work of our own institution supporting constitutional democracy must be supported and uploaded. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the IEC successfully managed to deliver free and fair elections in the 2020 by- elections again this year. The people of South Africa once again showed confidence in South Africa’ s oldest liberation movement. The movement of mama Winnie Madikizela Mandela and Oliver Tambo. The ANC retained 27 of the 40 wards it contested in the by-elections and won three new wards.

Taking into cognisance of the new normal which has been brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the IEC appointed former Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke to conduct an independent review of constitutes free and fair elections under these abnormal conditions. The IEC has indicated that it is technically ready to hold the 2021 election. As things currently stand, the municipal elections should proceed.

The Constitutional Court in New Nation Movement NPC and Others v President of the Republic of South Africa and Others, declared the electoral act as unconstitutional so far, as it does not allow individual candidates to contest national and provisional elections. Parliament was given 24-months to amend the applicable electoral legislation to bring it in line with the Constitution. The court has not prescribed an electoral system, it is Parliament which must decide on such a system.

Whatever system Parliament may decide on, the result must be proportional.

We welcome the timeous response by the Minister in appointing the Ministerial Advisory Committee, on the electoral system. A joint electoral workshop was held on 16 March and indeed, the electoral system adopted must be in keeping with our constitutional order including accountability and fairness and that the outcomes of the elections are proportional. Other constitutional principles to be adhered to include national unity, transformation of the centrality of the voters and citizens.

As the ANC, we are committed to adhering to the court judgement and to implement it within the timeframe. The ANC supports the Budget Vote. I thank, Chairperson.

Ms S A LUTHULI: Thank you, Chairperson and greeting. Chairperson, we reject Budget Vote on Home Affairs. The department is easily the most dysfunctional department of state in the country and that can directly be attributed to the incompetence of the Minister. The application for issuing of identity documents, passports and other critical documents issued by Home Affairs, becomes a nightmare for desperate South Africans.

Furthermore, the Minister is known by ... [Inaudible.] ... who has declared on several occasions that African immigrants are the one clogging service delivery in this country without a shred of evidence. Now under him, Africans are made to feel like ... [Inaudible.] ... when they go visit the offices of Home Affairs. He is the state sponsor of afrophobia and must be condemned. When he took over, the Minister declared war on queues on Home Affairs, and instead of dealing with the problem, it rather seems like he, himself, is the problem. He has not started any war on long queues at Home Affairs but he is defeated already.

The majority of Home Affairs offices across the country suffer from a chronic problem of having their system offline. Almost all the times. The Johannesburg and King William’s Town

offices are forever offline, that no one actually know what the staff of Home Affairs are doing at these offices. Over and above this, service offered by the department are simply not accessible to many people who live in rural areas.

Despite this, the department has no plans of any kind of opening satellite offices in the areas where their services are needed the most. As a result, our people travel long distances and arrives 4am at Home Affairs offices and these offices opens at 8am and they are assisted at 11:50 and their systems will be down the whole day and people will be told to come back the following day. This is a complete abuse of power and abuse of our people.

The Government Printing Works is on the verge of collapsing due to a lack of leadership. There are a lot of people acting as if it is a soap opera. The leadership is unable to engage with the stakeholders so as to reach an amicable solution.

Government Printing Works has lost financial data and the Auditor-General cannot carry 2020-21 audit. Government Printing Works has received a disclaimer audit option and their acting CEO and the Minister are refusing to sign it.

At Government Printing Works, there is a low staff morale. As a result, a petition has been signed by employees outlining allege corruption. Lack of leadership at Government Printing Works, the relationship amongst Eskom members has broken down. The relationship between Eskom members and the union are non- existing.

The IEC in cohort with the leadership of the ANC has insisted that we must go on local government elections this year, despite the fact that the country is ravaged by coronavirus. To date, they have not indicated how they will safeguard the health of our people during voter registration and the voting. The decision to go ahead with the elections will have serious and deadly impact on our people. The IEC together with the ANC must be held accountable for that.

They have failed to answer some key questions we have posed to them. We have asked, for instance, what happens if or when the COVID-19 pandemic is at its highest peak during that time set aside for voting? Will we go ahead with the votes? If not, who will reimburse political parties for work they would have done in preparation for the elections.

Most recently, the IEC has appointed a retired Deputy Chief Justice to investigate whether or not conditions exist for free and fair elections in October. They do this after announcing the date of the elections and going ahead with the preparations. The IEC in cohort with ANC leadership do not care about the wellbeing of the people who are going to vote.

Postponing the elections this year is not going to be a constitutional crisis. We are in the middle of a pandemic and our Constitution is not inflexible. The state cannot ask people to go to a ditch because the Constitution requires them to do so. That is not the purpose of the Constitution.

Regardless of these poor decisions by the IEC, we will go to a voting booth to vote the thieves out. We however call on the IEC to stop using South African Democratic Teachers Union, SADTU, members as voting officials. We know that they are ANC die-hards and they will steal votes when the ANC loses.

There is lack of leadership at Home Affairs and the Minister is the dictator without the required intellectual capacity to lead a department such as Home Affairs. For this reason, we reject this Budget. I thank you.

Mr X NGWEZI: Hon Chairperson, good morning. I am sorry, please allow me to not appear in the video. I am in the part of AbaQulusi so there is no network this side. Am I allowed Chairperson?

The HOUSE CHAIPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): You are allowed but in future you must put your picture.

Mr X NGWEZI: Those are technology issue, hey. Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, South Africans who do not sit in privilege positions like the Ministers, their families and the ANC cadres, have to go through agony when requiring services from Home Affairs. The poor and the most vulnerable of this country have an even harder time as they need to cross dangerous areas in pitch darkness to line up outside the Home Affairs offices all because of the rampant corruption in this government and the bottlenecks as a result of incompetence service delivery.

Home Affairs is one of the most pivotal departments in offering access to safe and equitable employment through an official identity document. The inefficiencies of this department do not only cost people money due to the cost of document processing fees, but people also have to take a day off at work. For general workers, they lose a day’s income due

to bottlenecks in this department. Systems in the department are always offline, as you have mentioned, hon Minister. I am happy that you admit to that.

Interdepartmental intervention has resulted in lately, to no improvement in the systems of this department. This department must consider using examples from other countries that have better record keeping and turnaround times and efficient operating procedures. It is baffling that Home Affairs still does not have appointment system. More so, its services have not been rolled out at all banks which are eager to assist.

This is a department which is in crisis. While our Minister simply look the other way, corruption is eating away at the heart and credibility of this department. Illegal migrants will tell you with pride how they only need to save a few

rands to buy a South African document. The department is presiding over full scale migration management stressors.

The government’s lack of documentation of migrants who works in South Africa leaves the labour sector vulnerable to conditions that brings about unfair labour practices. This is at the time when 30% of South Africans and 50% of our youths

are unemployed. For this reason, the IFP intends to introduce a Bill that seeks to give the power of employment back to South Africans in the low scale cycle.

The freedom and equity we have fought for is being undone by this department’s lack of proper documentation and border management. The IFP looks forward to local government elections being conducted in a free and safe manner. This department must protect against the buzzing in of people from

... I mean, provide adequate support to the IEC and make sure that voters are registered in wards that they usually reside in.

This department must offer services to verify the addresses of voters in South Africa together with the police so that the IEC can efficiently rely on documentation and the processing thereof. Therefore, with that being said, the IFP will reject this Budget Vote. Thank you, Chair.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: Chairperson, due to load shedding, I am on my mobile device and I will not be able to switch on my video.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Okay, next time, please, put on your picture.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: If you look at the complaints and grievances from the public, it obvious that this department is completely out of touch with the needs of the people. The state of Home Affairs offices nationwide is understaffed and underequipped to deal with the current load of new applications and renewals of IDs and passports, as well as birth certificates.

In Bloemfontein, for example, a person has no chance of being helped, if you don’t start queuing at 5:00 in the morning, only to realise, when you eventually get inside, that only two or three counters are being staffed. It is sad to think that this is the kind of regard this department has for our citizens, especially considering that a lot of these people are elderly.

The funding allocated for the border post is a positive, but once again, the question remains: Why did it take this department until 2021 to realise the priority of border control?

*Afrikaans*:

Suid-Afrika se hoë werkloosheidsyfer is nie ’n raailsel as

gekyk word na die ondenkbare hoeveelheid buitelanders wat die

land onwettig binnestroom en die laaste twee dekades binnegestroom het nie. Dit is om die minste te sê, ’n vernietiging vir die land, die ekonomie en die werkloosheidsyfer.

Die tegnologie om dit te bekamp bestaan al jare en die departement kon al lankal stelsels in plek gestel het om die invloei van onwettinge immigrante te beperk, maar soos met als in Suid-Afrika, eindig die fondse nie op daar waar dit geallokeer is nie en moet ons eie burgers nou daar onder ly.

Die agterstande met identiteitsdokumente en paspoorte raak by die dag groter en groter. Dit raak al hoe moeiliker of geboortes en sterftes te registreer. Algemene dienslewering by die departement se kantore bestaan nie, en die lys gaan net aan en aan.

*English*:

To comply with the constitutional obligation to protect the rights and identity of South Africans, this department will have to ensure that its offices start performing as it should and that there are enough staff that are qualified and capable to provide the services needed.

Stricter regulations and security on our borders should be prioritised and funding should be properly managed. Only then will this department reach its goal of serving in the best interest of South Africans. Thank you.

Ms C VISSER: Hon House Chair, hon Minister, hon members and special delegates, a core mandate of the Department of Home Affairs is to register and affirm the identity and status of citizens and to regulate immigration efficiently and securely, thus enabling citizens to exercise their constitutional rights and access services.

The covid-19 pandemic, with regard to the provisions of the Disaster Management Act reduced services to a crawl, due to the backlog that could now take years to clear. The inability and inconsistency of the department to resume their services are negatively impacting the much needed citizen-related services.

In March this year, the department confirmed that the validity of short- and long-term visas are extended to June and July this year. This massive backlog will impose inconsistent processes challenging foreigners. Further than that, with the local government elections being held in October this year, it

will result in a greater need of citizens applying for identity documents, also passports, birth certificates and death certificates. That will further challenge the backlog to sufficiently deliver services to South Africans.

It raises concerns of the many visa and permits applications rejected for reasons that should not apply. In the case of temporary visa applications where it was once very rare for an application to be pending for more than three months, there is now a backlog of approximately five months. While the department states that it is currently not dealing with citizens’ services, determination of status applications or anything related to them, even enquiries, this begs the question how a backlog can be possible when the department offers fewer services than it did before the pandemic.

Minister, you presented a multitude with apologetic challenges, but we live in a modern world with technology advanced communication. Home Affairs must improve communication and systemic malfunctioning to deliver their services.

In terms of the Minister’s White Paper in 2017 and the revised

Immigration Bill currently being drafted, the categories of

visas and permits currently in existence may be on their way out, placing holders of these visas in precarious positions.

We are also seeing a growing number of rejections in critical skills visa applications, freelanced work applications by foreign spouses of South Africans and work authorisations for foreigners with a retired-person visa. These rejections, often for nonsensical reasons, for example, the department’s staff stating that they could not get hold of an applicant’s employer, withholds people of their rights to work. But, there is a glimmer of hope for South African-born people, hoping to work abroad and remain South African citizens.

Currently, South Africans are frequently stripped of their South citizenship without warning if they apply for citizenship of another country. The DA is challenging this, arguing that section 6(1)(a) of the Citizen Act 88 of 1995 is inconsistent with the Constitution because certain clauses of the Act deprive citizens who have assumed foreign citizenship, of their right to vote, hold a South African passport and retained citizenship.

The Minister of the Department of Home Affairs counted that South Africans could retain their South African citizenship

and that they have dual citizenship, if they complied with the steps laid out in the Act. The Act states that individuals will automatically lose their citizenship, unless they apply for a letter of retention to keep their South African citizenship and specifically excludes dual citizenship by minor and/or marriage.

In a time like this, for those who were summarily stripped of citizenship, there is hope while judgment in this case was reserved. Should the DA win, they could be permitted to reclaim their citizenship in future.

Minister, South African borders that are repetitively reported need attention to improve to an efficient service for the betterment of South Africa, its citizens, tourism and trade.

Our current borders are a joke, like a drive-through Kentucky Fried Chicken. The security at border posts is less intensive than entering a shopping mall. We continue to see migrants entering South African illegally, crossing the border to collect social grants and it seems that it is uncontrollable.

We are raising concerns about the illicit trade and crime syndicates and the ascent of undetected cross border crime

resulting from dilapidated infrastructure and corrupts border officials.

The ban on cigarettes during the lockdown caused an exponential growth in consumer demand of illicit cigarettes. Illicit cigarettes enter from Zimbabwe through Masina and from Botswana through Skilpadneck with a breeze. Unfortunately, these border posts are not capable to control the influx of this trade flowing into South Africa tax free.

Kirsten Hilson said, and I quote: “People think of border security in very different ways, but to me it’s very simple, border security is national security, border security is the most basic and necessary responsibility of a sovereign nation.” Thank you.

Mr R MACKENZIE (Western Cape – Chairperson: Standing Committee on the Premier & Constitutional Matters): House Chairperson, and good morning hon Minister, the Deputy Minister and all our colleagues in the NCOP, and this debate actually comes at a well-timed period.

On behalf of the Western Cape it gives me great pleasure to participate in this budget debate today. I certainly want to

wish all members good health and wealth as we enter the third wave and wishing all South Africans great strength as we battle through this pandemic.

I also want to say, I’m also representing my constituency of Mitchells Plain today because there is a home affairs office Mitchells Plain. And I particularly went to Mitchell Plain’s office two days ago to stand in the queue and listen to the issues of what the community of Mitchells Plain are facing with home affairs. So, the issues that I’m going to raise are practical issues, hon Minister, and I hope that you take it in the spirit that I’m raising it.

Unfortunately, hon Minister, there are no new good news to report. There are constant complaints from the people standing in the queue and the frustrations of the people I’m going to share with you this morning. One constant complaint, which is the age old story, which many members have raised earlier on, is the long queues that are being experienced in the office.

I want to take the Minister back, on the 22nd of April 2018, the then Minister of Home Affairs actually launched the ‘War on Queues’ campaign. And the aim at the time was to address the hours and in some cases, days, where residents would have

to stand in the queue from the early morning for the IDs, passports and birth certificates.

One of the ladies in the queue, hon Minister and Deputy Minister, was she received a number on the Thursday and she wasn’t helped, and had to come back on the Friday to Mitchells Plain home affairs office, and then the system was offline.

So, when the Minister talks about he shares the frustrations, I don’t think the Minister understands the frustration some of our communities go through, it is not comparable; with due respect, hon Minister.

Hon Motsoaledi, in November 2019 your department briefed the committee on the ‘War on Queues’ and said there were a number of obstacle were to blame, including high client volumes, the discontinuation of the Saturday hours, inefficient controls of queues among other things and the greatest obstacle was, obviously, the unreliable and often online Information Technology, IT, system, which you’ve mentioned again today, but you didn’t mention a plan to fix this.

We know that the online IT system falls under the authority of the State Information Technology Agency, SITA, but given that

the service provided by home affairs, the ultimate buck stops with the Minister.

Early this year, we also note that the committee on home affairs expressed its disappointment with the department to resolve these IT challenges that continue to hamper your ability to deliver services. And today, the hon Minister, rightfully so, admitted it. But it’s been more than three years since the ‘War on Queues’ began and from where I and the people of Mitchells Plain are standing, the national government has lost the war.

So, today, hon Minister, I’m going to give you another opportunity and ask you a series of questions about this ‘War on Queues’: What is your department doing about the issue?

What is the timelines that the department and SITA have agreed to in order to fix of the IT system? How is it possible that despite decades of dealing with the same problem, your predecessors, we are dealing with the same problems we had 20 years ago, the IT system?

I can share with you, Minister, 20 years ago when I went for my ID at home affairs in Wynberg, I stood in the queue and the system was offline. The other day I took my 16-year-old

daughter, we stood in the queue and the system was offline; the same issue for over 20 years. What are you going to do differently, hon Minister, that your predecessors could not fix?

These are questions that millions of people have been asking from home affairs for decades now.

We need the hon Minister to be clear and honest with timelines so the public can have faith in the home affairs that continues to destroy the trust relationship between the government and the people.

Hon Minister, in many of our communities refugees are struggling, and it has been mentioned before by other speakers, for the poor slow delivery from home affairs to access documents. These individuals have left their homes looking for a better opportunity, and as humanitarians, it is our responsibility to assist them with proper documentation. We have received so many complaints from refugees who have not being able to renew their documentation and they are being harassed by communities and police and generally cannot get around because they unable to produce any sort of documentation. The Minister has said nothing about this today.

I urge and call on the Minister to use your powers and urgently open the relevant office to ensure individuals can access these services.

One story, in particular, hon Minister, and is quite heart breaking. A young refugee man here in Cape Town has been offered the life changing opportunity to study in the United States of America, USA, on a full funded bursary. He is no expense to the state, but he’s missing the opportunity because he has not been able to secure travel documents from your department.

Your department is aware of this, Minister, and I’ve even emailed your office, and I won’t share the email address here, obviously, but I’ve emailed your office and they have not even given me an acknowledgement of receipt; directly from your office on this particular case. And I must say there has been officials replying to me but they are saying: Member of Parliament, the Minister will have to make this ultimate final decision on this matter. And sadly, your office didn’t even have the decency to acknowledge receipt of those emails; and that is quite sad. So, you cannot win the war on queues, the war on system if your good office, the highest office in this

country, does not even acknowledge receipt of communication from Members of Parliament, the war is already lost.

There’s another matter that’s been raised early on by my colleague, on the issues of retention letters that are not been processed. This is a massive impact on families that require these important documents. I also have received requests from people ... even your own Twitter account, as of two days ago, people replying, teared them but your Twitter account, home affairs, is not responding on this matter. That office has been closed since March of last year and there’s no indication from your good office as to when people can reply. People have lost their citizenship, others had to pay massive fees and others are just wait and see what your department is doing.

And sadly, Minister, bizarrely, there’s a company called Immigration Boutique, and this is for you and the director- general, that charges a massive fee to help people get this done. How is it possible that a company called Immigration Boutique provides such a service to law-abiding citizens but your department cannot do it? It is really worth looking into and I hope the Minister, the Deputy Minister and the director- general can address this matter.

There are so many other issues we can raise here today, registration of births for people in rural areas and we talk about Charlotte Maxeke this, 150 years, but the greatest joy to the late Charlotte Maxeke will be to deliver services to rural black women on time and issue their documents; that is how you honour the legacy of somebody, by not delivering services you’re delivering an injustice to 150 years of history.

I hope that the Minister can respond and share a clear, implementable plan with timelines on how to fix his department based on experience, on non-communication from his own office, I suspect that it’s unlikely to happen, members.

The inefficiencies at home affairs have a very real impact on every single person in South Africa. A person cannot travel legally, apply for a job legally, grant or rent a home even Reconstruction and Development Programme, RDP, homes without having the proper documents and this department, by not fixed, is an economic opportunity lost for our children and our youth.

The Minister mentioned 45 years of our youth of 1976. The greatest joy, the greatest legacy would be to ensure that our

youth of 2021 have their documentation so they can apply for job opportunities, that’s how you restore legacy and dignity to youth; given the terrible history where we come from.

I hope the Minister and the department understand the importance of their department and that the support that they will give for dignity, for our youth for ensuring they have the proper documentation.

This department is the most important department in the country. There’s nothing you can do without home affairs. If home affairs is fixed, South Africa will work. Thank you, Chairperson.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon House Chairperson, the Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, the chairperson of the Select Committee on Security and Justice, hon members of the NCOP, the Director-General and the management team of Home Affairs and fellow South Africans, the month of June is significant in our calendar as it is dedicated to the youth of South Africa. We are proud and grateful to be standing on the shoulders of giants such as Hector Pieterson.

This year we celebrate Mama Charlotte Maxeke for her immense contribution to our struggle for freedom. It is though their efforts and resolve that today every young person in the country can access government services that will shape their future for the better.

Yesterday, I conducted an official visit to Polokwane to encourage the youth to apply for their smart ID cards in preparation for their matric examination, and to enable those who are eligible to exercise their democratic right in the upcoming local government election.

During this financial year, the Department of Home Affairs will continue with this programme in partnership with the Department of Basic Education to ensure that every qualifying learner in Grade 12 is not without an ID. Our mobile units are already visiting schools and communities countrywide to accelerate the issuance of smart ID cards. Whilst minimising the queues in frontline office, the mobile units do not only collect applications but now have the capacity to issue out smart ID cards.

Chairperson, the resurgence of COVID-19 in this third wave calls upon all of us to be vigilant and in particular those

who are visiting our offices for services, we are slowly but surely merging out of a difficult period in our country. As the Department of Home Affairs we have ensured that we keep our offices open to continue providing services whilst being responsible because we understand that our inability to provide services will have disastrous impact on our country. The impact this has been in that in some provinces we had to close our offices more than once, impacting on service delivery. However, we have put in place measures to mitigate the infection rate such as procurement and distribution of personal protective equipment, training of our staff on COVID-

19 protocol, providing sanitising stations to our offices and clearly marking areas inside and outside offices for social distancing.

Chairperson, we derive our mandate from the Constitution of the Republic and we have to ensure that no citizen may be deprive of citizenship. Every child has the right to a name and nationality from birth. Every citizen has the right to a passport. By affirming citizenship, we essentially build a single reputable national identity and enable the state to provide access to administer services efficiently and securely. This key role ensures that individuals are able to access all their rights set out in the Bill of Rights.

Citizens who cannot affirm their official identity cannot access services, participate in an election, legally cross a border, open a bank account, travel by plane or sign a contract. They are also not added to the official statistics used to plan and provide services and future generations will not know their existence as they are not recorded on the civil register.

Hon Chairperson, we have made good progress towards universal early birth registration which is one of the key responsibilities of government and an essential component of security, good governance and sound administration. During the 2020-21 financial year the department set a target of registering 750 000 births within 30 days. I am happy to report that the department managed to register 119582 births of which 751 087 were births registered within 30 calendar days. The highest number of births were registered in Gauteng followed by KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces. The least number of births registered were in the Northern Cape, Free State and North West, which is not a surprising phenomenon given the distribution of the population in the country.

It is our endeavour to continue to ensure that all births are timeously registered and that no child birth is left not

registered in South Africa. We will continue to intensify the message of the importance of early birth registration through outreach programmes in the provinces. In addition, we have embarked on the optimisation of birth registration at health facilities which will see an incremental increase of additional 182 additional health facilities in the financial year 2022-23, and 1 012 in the financial year 2023-24 leading to the target of 1 445 fair health facilities country wide.

In achieving this strategy, the department has begun with a paperless automation of birth registration to embrace technological advancements with the view of eradicating statelessness and curbing fraudulent birth registration. This automation project is currently completing its pilot at 24 offices and will see a staggering rollout with required updated infrastructure in the current financial year of 2021. By the end of March 2021 around 17 million South African citizens had been issued with smart ID cards since its inception in 2013. For the 2020-21 financial year alone, the performance stood at more than 1,2 million smart ID cards issued to citizens 16 years of age and above, which is an over achievement of 324 935 against the set target. Of this number 622 539 smart IDs were issued to first time applications

comprising mainly of the youth and 611 144 were reissues which is the replacement of the green ID book.

As of 30 May 2021 we had a total of 429 964 uncollected IDs that are currently in our offices nationwide. Uncollected IDs have been identified in our offices in Gauteng, standing at about 116 000, KwaZulu-Natal 61 000, Eastern Cape around

54 000, Western Cape at 49 000. We therefore urge applicants to visit their local department of home affairs and immediately upon receiving notification that their documents are ready for collection so that they can register on 17 and

18 July 2021 for the upcoming local government elections. We are also going to be engaging on a special ID collection drive to drastically reduce these numbers of uncollected IDs.

Hon Chair, the pandemic has emphasised the need to fast track innovation in respect to how we render services as well as revolutionising our back office functions. Many of our clients are already using the e-home affairs services channel launched in 2016 allowing them to pay online, schedule an appointment and apply for a smart ID card and passport at 25 participating bank branches in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape. Thus far, approximately 212 000 smart cards and more than 222 000

passports have been obtained through the existing participating branches and to a smaller extent at online offices which is a huge success.

The Department of Home Affairs will finalise the public and private partnership with the banking sector and National Treasury to rollout these across the country before the end of the financial year. In the current financial year, we will conclude our memorandum of understanding, MoU, with the banks which includes Standard bank, First National bank, Nedbank, ABSA, Discovery bank, Capitec and Ubank, to extend e-home affairs to 20 additional branches, prioritizing Durban, Pietermaritzburg, East London, Nelspruit and Polokwane. We are expanding the footprint when it comes to partnering with banks.

As with regards with technology we are steadily making positive progress in implementing the automated biometrics in identification systems that will enable advance identification and verification through finger prints, palm prints, iris, facial recognition and DNA.

As of 01 April 2021, the project has been reactivated through a new service provider and the first phase is expected to be

completed by no later than November this year. The ... [Inaudible.] ... will form the backbone of the future of the national identity system which will replace the currently disintegrated system which are the national population register, the enhanced movement control system and the national immigration system.

When it comes to information technology, we must not just talk and complain about it, we have to ... [Inaudible.] ... our current IT infrastructure. Thank you.

Mr D R RYDER: House Chair, the COVID-19 pandemic and provisions of the Disaster Management Act have reduced already slow Home affairs processes to a crawl, impacting thousands of people and creating a backlog that could take years to clear.

This is the opening paragraph of an excellent article by Immigration and citizenship law expert, Stephanie de Saude- Darbandi.

Ms de Saude Darbandi points out the fact that home affairs offices were initially shut down entirely during lockdown, and then reopened but with such limited offerings as to render them unable to deliver on their mandate. To make matters

worse, the inconsistency between offices is staggering and creates sufficient confusion to remove any credibility that this department once had. Read the article, Minister, I have put the link in the chats. It highlights so many of the relevant issues that need your attention

The backlog of identity documents, particularly in an election year, is problematic. This has been pointed out by hon Visser earlier on in her discussion. How will the backlog be caught up? The increase in appropriation to the IEC is noted and of course welcomed, but the IEC doesn’t operate in a bubble and needs your department to be an enabler.

Looking at the now famous 2021 estimates of national expenditure, the vote purpose for Home Affairs reads as follows, and I quote: “To efficiently determine and safeguard the identity and status of citizens. Regulate immigration to ensure security, promote development and fulfil South Africa’s international obligations.”

What a disastrous admission of failure, Minister. Ask anyone on the streets because pointed out by hon Ngwezi and hon MacKenzie on what happens in the streets. You mentioned it yourself, the longest waiting queues that happen around home

affairs building just show that this mandate is not being carried out. Ask the desperate immigrants and refugees if they have been well served. Go in to Hillbrow and see how much regulation that is called for by your vote purpose is actually taking place.

The very rule of law is under threat. We do not believe in closing borders, but proper processing and regulation is massively important for government planning. How many foreign nationals are there currently in South Africa? The honest reply is that nobody knows. How then can you plan for government services? Again, your department is the enabler but not doing your job.

The issue of corruption of course is one that has plagued the Home Affairs department for years and it has been mentioned as well by a number of speakers today. Not necessarily the grand scale ANC sponsored state-capture corruption, though Home affairs certainly played their part on this count. I am referring instead to the petty corruption where our entire home affairs system is undermined with need for the submission of the now famous R200 form. The R200 form that apparently has to be submitted sometimes in triplicate as well. Identity documents get sold for a few of these.

Temporary and permanent residence requests require this to be attached for processing.

The stench of abuse of power hangs heavily over the work of this department, Minister, and brings our country into disrepute. If you want to see how to limit corruption, you don’t need to travel far. Just go to Botswana, they have excellent systems in place, at border control and throughout their system.

But listen to what the Minister had to raise today. He paid some lip service to Youth Month. Minister, it would be much more credible if you actually realised that getting ID documents out on time, processing applications on time is an enabler for young people. It enables them to write their matric exams, to register for jobs, to do all these things and yet your department is hampering people left, right and centre.

Minister, I have noted as well again looking at the estimate of national expenditure that it is very much just a cut and paste of last year’s document. The point is that you are a new Minister appointed in 2019 and I would have loved to see some of your authority being put into your department. Instead, all

we have is the fact that there has been an additional programme added but that programme is nothing new, it is just taken out in some of the previous programmes and putting them together and rehearsing them. So, exactly what could be expected from home affairs in the past is more of exactly the same that we can expect.

Your title of “We care” that you had on your sign behind you just doesn’t follow through. Batho Pele is something that is not experienced in your offices.

Reliance of the courts has become the order of the day for skilled applicants wanting to enter the country. An example is the recent case in The Supreme Court of Appeal in relation to the 473 applicants awaiting lawful outcomes to their applications. The five judges of the SCA, in their judgment, referred to the attitude of Home affairs as, and I quote: “disgraceful”, “unconscionable”, “deliberately obstructive” and “dilatory”. Sadly, to this day and in spite of that order from the Supreme Court of Appeal, Home affairs has still not finalised all these outstanding matters and while we considered seeking a contempt of court it is not going to help because really it is people that need service at the end of the day.

The battles of Home affairs in the courts have become famous in legal circles, the same arguments are put forward over and over, in spite of past judgements refuting those arguments.

The result is wasted money, wasted time, frustrated people wanting to add to our economy but being frustrated by our government.

This department is out of compliance with its own act. This department needs a shake-up and a serious amount of introspection to review how things should be done in order to comply with their constitutional mandate. I thank you.

Ms M BARTLET: Good morning hon House Chairperson, good afternoon hon Minister and everybody, hon Chairperson, Members of Executive Council, members of the House, fellow compatriots. The ANC supports this Budget Vote. Outcome Three of the National Development Plan entails that by 2030, all people will be and feel safe.

The Department of Home Affairs plays a critical role in ensuring the safety of all people in the country, hon House Chair. The ANC’s 54th National Conference, noted that Department of Home Affairs does not have a required advance technology, professionals, all legislations required to

modernise and maintain its system. And processes hon House Chair for the safekeeping and maintenance of records. The national conference resolved that legislation should be developed to reposition the Department of Home Affairs, as a core security department House Chair.

To enable it to achieve its vision a modern and security department managed by professionals. The repositioning of the programme is meant to ensure that the department is able to deliver on its core mandate. To empower citizens to enhance national security, enable economic development and an efficient government.

A repositioned department hon House Chair, will have professional staff that manages identity and international migration securely. Efficient ... [Inaudible.] ... hon House Chair is critical, the department is positioned within the security system of the state, so that it contributes to the national security and to enable to protect its people, the systems in the data House Chairperson.

One of the key priority of the Department of Home Affairs, for the medium term is the phase implementation of key elements of the White Paper on Home Affairs. The reposition programme and

the legislation the defines the Department of Home Affairs role and mandate in the democratic sovereign state, which must confront deeply rooted challenges of social rooted challenges, of social injustice, economic development an efficient government is needed.

In that regards, hon House Chair, the Department of Home Affairs Bill is critical, for the repositioning programme. The department reported the Bill ought to be prioritised in a medium term.

House Chairperson, the 54th National Conference noted the serious challenge of the porousness of our borders, which threatens our ... [Inaudible.] ... integrity. The conference resolve to expedite the financial and the finalisation of the Border Management Authority.

Hon House Chair, the Border Management Authority, BMA, assumes frontline customs function at parts of entry and revenue collection must remain a South African Revenue Services, SARS, function supported by BMA. The Border Management Authority Bill was passed by the Parliament and the President signed it into Law on 21 July 2020.

On 20 December 2020, the President signed the proclamation that brought in operation Chapter Three of the Act in particular Section 7, Section 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Chapter Three of the Act came into operation on 1 January 2021. This proclamation House Chair, allows the President to appoint a commissioner and deputy commissioners. As soon as Chapter Three is brought into operation in its entirety, the establishment and operationalisation of the BMA will commence.

The BMA will ensure more efficient processing of goods at the country’s ports of entry. It will strengthen our capacity to address border’s threat that could undermine our country ‘security, strengthen and economic development House Chairperson.

The department has indicated that the BMA will continuously with the roll out over the medium term. House Chairperson, the border governing strategy charges member states that border shore shall be understood as an instrument to promote peace, security and stability, at the zone ... [Inaudible.] ... relation, of regional integration and sustainable development.

In this regard, House Chairperson the political, economic and strategic choices of the state, to ensure sovereignty must

define a border regime, able to combine national, regional and continental interest.

The strategy makes it clear, that state be the primary responsibility to protect their populations, the territory and ensure the security of their borders. House Chairperson, these responsibilities entail measures to maintain physical borders security. But, also the human security of citizens including populations in border lines and the maintenance of peaceful cross border relations.

Hon House Chairperson, if borders are porous and do not fulfil their function of separation, control and protection, dangerous to the state coming the forms of transnational organised ... [Inaudible.] This operation of armed violent groups ... [Inaudible.] ... to age of 16 years and above.

Which is an over achievement by 324 995 again the set target House Chairperson.

In June 2020, all Home Affairs offices across all provinces, embarked on a campaign to assist learners to obtain smart identity document, ID cards to ensure that remain eligible to set for the final matric exams, without the need to disrupt the learning programme.

Hon House Chair, on the Youth Day last year, the Department of Home Affairs officially launched the Learners ‘Smart ID Programme in Mpumalanga. With each of Home Affairs provincial offices around the country, existing learners with IDs to obtain the smart ID cards. Of this initiative 622 539 smart ID cards to first time applicants which were predominantly the youth.

The department announced that there are many uncollected IDs at various Home Affairs offices. We encourage all applicants to collect them as soon as possible House Chair, because we are into year of local government elections.

Hon House Chairperson, it was reported that the Department of Home Affairs has developed a National Identity System, specification documents with the State Information Technology Agency, SITA, in partnership with the *Council for Scientific and Industrial Research*, CSIR, to ensure readiness, once the decision on development partner had been made.

The procurement process of the National Identity System, NIS, was expected commence on 2020-21 financial year. However, there was ... [Inaudible.] ... requirement and risk associated with an open bidding process for a programme of this

magnitude. The Department of Home Affairs in its engagement with the National Treasury House Chair, to explore other options. We will continue to monitor the incremental role of the BMA. That is repositioning of the department and the other priorities House Chairperson, which the department has set for itself. House Chair, the ANC supports the Vote of this year.

Thank you very much hon House Chairperson and thank you, hon Minister and all hon members, thank you very much [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you, hon House Chairperson and thank you, hon members, for this lively debate. Hon MacKenzie you have said a mouthful and have heard you with both ears. You have raised many important pertinent important issues. Although most of your colleagues were just throwing mud and mark around, which of course won’t stick. You raised pertinent issues that are practical. And, hon MacKenzie I agree with you wholeheartedly. South Africa will only work and it is working because there is a Department of Home Affairs.

Nobody in this country will get the South African Social Security Agency SASSA money, 17 million people every month without identification of Home Affairs. And those long ques you see from SASSA, they all have documentation from Home Affairs. No student will ever write matric without any

documentation from Home Affairs. The fact that hundreds of thousands of students wrote matric last year, is because they’ve got identity documents, IDs, identification from Home Affairs. Nobody will get a university degree and be accredited and graduate and thousands graduate every year because they’ve got documentation of Home Affairs. Millions of you have got bank accounts, none of you would have opened bank account, without documentation of Home Affairs. Lawyers in the court of law in this country will never finalise the execution of estates without a *gazette* to that effect being printed by Government Printing Works in Home Affairs.

You are going to go for local government elections very soon, there’s nobody who’s going to vote who is on the voter’s roll and there will be 26 million people on the voter’s roll. That voter’s roll was compiled by the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, with information from Home Affairs. Each and every one of the 26 million people appearing on that voter’s roll compiled by the IEC, has got clear and credible documentation from Home Affairs. None of you could have gone to any overseas visit without getting documents from Home Affairs.

We are now busy vaccinating South Africans and millions of them, more 40 million will be vaccinated, they all are registering with documentation from Home Affairs. As I am speaking now at the last count, we had more than 400 000 IDs, in Home Affairs offices which are uncollected, they are ready, despite us sending short massages, sms, to people they are not coming to collect them.

But I just want to mention these few facts to show that indeed, the Department of Home Affairs is the anchor of the economic activity, the social life, the legal system of the country. They all depend on Home Affairs, and if anything goes wrong there, all those will not be able to move. So where are the problems. I have not hit in any problem today. I came up very clear and open, that our original sin, as you have also identified Mr MacKenzie, is the information and technologies communication system. That is the original sin from Home Affairs.

And, every day when I go back to work, this is the original sin I am trying to resolve, because we have done away with manual system and introduced a live capture about eight years ago. And while many government departments depend on State Information Technology Agency for their information services.

If anything goes wrong with them, the other department won’t feel it but Home Affairs will definitely feel it. To the extend where House Chairperson when this original sin of IT system gave us headaches because many of us in the department are not Information Technology, IT, experts.

We went to the headquarters of State Information Technology Agency, SITA, which is providing these services in Centurion, we put up a war room. We called all the IT companies in the country that are providing these services, International Broadcasting Machine, IBM, Equivalent Operating Hours, EOH later replaced by Gijima, BBDND, SHANNON, you name them, we even called their Chief Executive Officers, CEOs to sit there and help us resolve this IT system, the original sin of Home Affairs.

We are going to make in routes because we have actually identified why South African Revenue Services, SARS, doesn’t have their system down, we have actually identified that it’s because it has been exempted from getting these services through SITA and we are working with Treasury to do that.

There is this song that is being sung hon House Chair, about the Government Printing Works, GPW, being on the verge of collapse. Fortunately, the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs

did an oversight there, two weeks ago, they are aware of who is feeding this poison. The GDW is about to collapse.

I have just announced that IEC bought voter management devices, VMD, they cost R3 million, Treasury did not even have a cent to buy those VMDs that will make election free and fair and credible, that money comes from Government Printing Works, the one you claim is about to collapse. It is not going to do so.

Now, House Chairperson, as I said, IEC is going to... [Interjection.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Conclude Minister, please.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: ... excuse me?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Can you please conclude your time is over.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Yes, yes I have concluded, I’m just saying, IEC will conduct free, fair and credible elections, as I said because Home Affairs will provide them

with the means to do so. So, House Chairperson in due course, I will provide this programme which hon MacKenzie is talking about, because we’ve been developing it a long time ago, to solve the original sin of Home Affairs, which is causing all these problem that members have been talking about the whole day here. Thank you very much.

# DEBATE ON YOUTH DAY: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ACCESS TO FREE HIGHER EDUCATION AND EXPANDED ACCESS TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

**(Subject for Discussion)**

Ms K KHAKHAU: Chairperson, next week Wednesday South Africa is supposed to celebrate Youth Day, a day that should naturally be a celebratory reminder of our freedom. Instead on this day the youth of this country will once more sit more convinced than ever that the emancipation of young lives remains a mere idea that pops up in political discussions just so to make the government look somewhat relevant or concerned when the truth is, this government could not even begin to bother itself with sustainable solutions to the plight of young people.

A total of 74,7% of young people in this country are unemployed. These are not just figures, these are human beings with families and themselves to feed and dreams to realise.

Now, Chair, if South Africa was a university student, it would be 0,3% away from excellently obtaining a distinction on its how to fail a nation majoring in securing the doom of its youth degree.

Some of these young people have been born into poverty and thanks to this government’s lack of direction, possibly face no chance of freeing themselves from the painful shackles of constantly being reminded that poverty is their home. While some of our youth hold legitimate tertiary academic qualifications but are unable to find a decent job if any at all, simply because South Africa’s economy cannot carry them.

Yes, the ANC government disguised as the liberation messiah

has and continues to fail this nation’s youth.

Chairperson, when Hector Peterson and many other sacrificed their lives 45 years ago, they did so to afford young people meaningful and unobstructed access to quality education. They did so just so to ensure that every young South African can have a fair shot at making something out of themselves while giving themselves and their families dignity and a sustainable unity to put food on the table.

Chair, being secured and comfort is not a privilege but definitely something our ancestors died for us and generations to come to experience as a norm.

Chairperson, every year young people are forced to face the bitter reality of not being able to gain access to a TVET college or university of their choice because these institutions either do not administer online education or do not have enough capacity to carry our youth. Some of those who do manage to make it through the system are sometimes forced to either drop out, choke in debt or not even accept their offer to study because they either cannot afford tuition and or accommodation fees or cannot afford to have one meal a day and unless they are at home.

More so, some as result of these obstacles amongst a range of others, are forced to make peace with the fact that unless you have a degree, a diploma or a tertiary certificate, or know someone who knows someone, you are doomed.

Yet the government does little to nothing to change the channel legislation and funds to solve this problem. The best they could come up with is a promise of free education for all when they know that it is nonsensical to in a country that is

rooted in deep inequality as ours have the state fund education Patrice Motsepe, Johna Ruppert’s grandchildren continuously fund the education of millions of other South Africans across the country.

Secondly, the country does not have the money to sustain the solution. Even if the money was there Chair, it would not be available at the end of any day because it is kept in a rot friendly basket of looting, controlled by yours truly, the corrupt and greedy ANC. This however comes at a point [Interjections.] because we all know that the only government [Interjections.]

Mr K M MMOIEMANG: Point of order: I rise on a point of order in terms of Rule 36. The hon member is not addressing 16 June; she’s struggling across so many issues. Can the hon member be relevant please?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon members, just this once, the day is very long. There’s five hours to go with all the speeches and so on so let’s step on the right note. If you have a point of debate, please raise that point when your turn comes to speak. If you differ with an opinion here yes, you can make a bit of noise here and there but don’t disrupt the

speech or whatever is presented by the speaker. So, I’m pleading for calm and tolerance. Hon member please proceed. That’s not a point of order.

Ms K KHAKHAU: Thank you Chairperson. Chair, I reiterate that even if the money was there, it would not be available at the end of any day because it is kept in a rot friendly basket of looting, controlled by the corrupt and greedy ANC. This however comes at no shock because we all know that the only government that can and will deliver us from this evil is the DA government.

How, it must be compulsory for South African institution of higher learning to administer education in a dual method.

Therefore, allowing both contact and online classes and assessments.

Chair, not every young person has the privilege to go to school and just focus on school alone. Some have no other choice but to find a job immediately after high school just so they and their families can survive.

Therefore, it cannot be that we have to choose between being hungry and getting a tertiary qualification. This will also

help young people who cannot afford accommodation but can still get their qualifications at their institution of choice within the comfort of their own homes. The doors of education must be open for all.

Secondly, what we also need to do is to disabuse ourselves from the school of thought that teaches us that the only way to make a living is to be a UCT or a university bachelor of whatever degree holder and if not then you are useless or not smart.

South Africa must invest all its energy into developing technologically and vocationally skilled young people such as electricians, emergency medical technicians, sober and awake truck drivers, mechanics, fire fighters, paramedics, laboratory technicians, machine builders and the list goes on.

If we focus on this, there would be a minimal if any at all need to outsource skills and expertise. Chairperson, this however must start at a high school level. The longer and more focused you start, you are at achieving something, the more successful you become.

Now, we need to make deliberate efforts into ensuring that as many young people as possible have the practical competencies necessary to enter and stay in our labour market.

This kind of education and skills development can and will open doors to the creation of economically and socially rewarding jobs while simultaneously building the country.

Yet, to nobody’s surprise, these solutions have no home in any of the ANC corridors because incompetence is the organisation’s alma mater. Chairperson, this is precisely why we cannot fully celebrate youth day.

*Sesotho*

Re ke kebe ra keteka maemo a re ahlolelang dibe tsa batho ba bang. Batho ba batjha ba lahlehetswe ke tshepo mmme ketapele ya naha e dutse e tshwela demokrasi ka mathe, e re nyahladitse, e a phoqa!

Ruri badimo ba rona le bona moo ba robetseng teng, ha ba robala ka kgotso hobane le bona ba maketse feela ke tlontlollo le ho hloka ditlhong ha mmuso wa ANC. Ka hoo, ke le motho a motjha, ha ho letho leo ke ikghansthang ka lona ka puso ena.

*English*

Chairperson, I thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Hon Chairperson, members of the National Council of Provinces, this year we are celebrating 27 years of freedom and democracy in South Africa and we mark 45 years since the June 16 students’ uprising in 1976. Again this ... national youth day as an officially recognised national day to celebrate the resilience, sacrifices and achievements of the youth of South Africa in the struggle against the apartheid colonial regime.

We commemorate the youth month through a theme linked to Charlotte Maxeke’s 150th anniversary, “The Year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke: Growing youth employment for an inclusive and transformed society” Comrades, members of the NCOP, President Oliver Tambo said: “The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future.”

This is the reason that government took a decision to establish the Department of Higher Education and Training in 2009, with its primary goal being to provide education and

training opportunities to all South Africans who are out of school, whether they attended school or not and whether they have passed or failed to acquire further education and skills that they require. In this task, we are guided by our White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, which was adopted by Cabinet in 2013. This is our guide that will catalyse faster movement forward to meet our National Development Plan targets. Equally, our strategic goal and objective is to help create a capable workforce that will support an inclusive growth path to meet the needs of our society, especially those of our economy.

During the early twentieth century, the twin concerns of the South African state were guaranteeing capital accumulation on the basis of cheap unskilled black labour and consolidating the structures of white political domination and privilege. As a result, the education and training of blacks was not a priority. Segregation, institutionalised in the political and social spheres also constituted a central plank of the apartheid education policy. In practice, this meant limited funding, and inadequate provision of facilities, for black and especially African education, as well as an organisational structuring of schooling which took a racial form. The effect of state policies was to ensure that higher education was

essentially restricted to certain sections of the white dominant classes.

Prior to 1948, black higher education was largely confined to the universities. There was no provision of advanced technical education, this being a result of the racial division of labour and institutionalised job reservation, which restricted blacks primarily to unskilled occupations. By 1948, black universities students numbered only 950, a mere 4,6% of total enrolment - reflecting the underdeveloped state of black higher education as a whole.

It is generally recognised that mass popular struggles during the 1970s and 1980s played a pivotal role in eroding apartheid and creating the conditions for the transition to democracy in our country. Of course, in accounts of political opposition to apartheid and capitalism during the late 1970s and 1980s, the campaigns and activities of black secondary and higher education students and their militancy, played a role as a catalyst and detonator of anti-apartheid political struggles.

Enrolment planning is the main process through which the department ensures that the university system is able to expand in a manner that is commensurate with the funding that

is available, and in ways that address the skills needs in the country. As a result of the range of initiatives, enrolment at universities has been steadily increasing.

The total audited student headcount enrolment at universities, all of which are public higher education institutions, was at

1 085 568 in the 2018 academic year, which includes both full- time and part-time enrolments for contact and distance studies. Enrolments are also more closely matching the demographic profile of the general South African population. The student demographic profile in 2018 comprised Africans at 75,6% or 820 61, Whites at 12,9% or 140 305, Coloureds at 6,1% and Indian or Asian 4,4%.

Compared to 2013 enrolments, the proportions were 70,1% African, 17,5% White, 6,2% Coloured and 5,5% Indian. In 2007

there were 62,6% African, 23,7% White, 6,4% Coloured and 6,9% Indian students. Regarding gender, 59,1% of students were female, while 40,9% were male in the 2018 academic year, while compared to 58,5% female and 41,7% male in 2013 and 55,5% female and 44,5% male in 2007. These represent drastic increase in terms of the number of young women who are registering in our higher education institutions.

In the last five years, we established three new universities. The University of Mpumalanga, Sol Plaatje University and Sefako Makgatho University are developing in line with the development trajectories that have been planned for them. The new universities provide future opportunities for the youth to study in specialised fields and thereby contributing towards to the economy of the country.

With regard to enhanced student funding to ensure improved access for the poor and working class. And as we did in December 2017, government announced that it would be providing fully subsidised higher education and training for poor and working class students studying at public universities and public technical and vocational education and training, TVET, institutions.

The new bursary programme was implemented for first time entry university students in the 2018 academic year to support students from families earning a gross annual income of

R350 000 per annum, to cover their tuition costs, books and learner support materials and to provide subsidies to assist with accommodation, living expenses and transport costs where appropriate. The third cohort benefited in the 2020 academic year. Each year a new cohort will be added, and in the 2022

academic year all students in the system who qualify will benefit. The funding to support students from poor and working class backgrounds in colleges and universities has grown from R11,2 billion in 2016 to R35 billion in 2020. This is an increase of 212% in the funding over the five-year period, and has placed the budget for support to higher education and training institutions as one of the fastest growing in government.

Intertwined with student access and expansion of the system is student success. When students do not progress through the system, this creates blockages, and institutions cannot accept additional students due to students occupying spaces in the system for longer than they should. As part of increasing the success rate of students are the interventions that the Department of Higher Education and Training has put in place such as the Foundation Provision Grant or FPG.

The FPG has been designed to assist struggling students in the system in order to improve the success rate within the historically disadvantaged institutions. The University Capacity Development Programme is another programme through which key support mechanisms for teaching and learning to enhance student success are implemented.

Our Minister appointed a Ministerial Task Team on the Implications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution for Post- School Education and Training which was published in the *Government Gazette* to advise me on how the department should respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Amongst the recommendations of task team is to have a strong core of education and training programmes that align with the changing needs of both the South African society and the world of work in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. At the time when the state of disaster was declared by the President on 15 March, enormous efforts were implemented to transform and improve the post-school education and training, PSET, sector in our country. Indeed, COVID-19 had an impact in the 2020 academic year and has resulted in very serious and dire consequences. As a result of this epidemic, we traversed uncharted territories with recourse that have never been use in symbiosis by all our PSET institutions. The entire sector had to work collectively to chart a way out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Minister also established a Ministerial task team which continuously contributed to the discussion and found a common

denominator in the challenges confronting our sector. The team, which I chaired, included SA Public College Organisation, Sapco, University South Africa Forum, Labour Unions, the SA Union of Students and the SA Vocational Education and Training Student Association, Satvestsa, which is the student union representing TVET college students, and all the public and private institutions which were part of the team.

Our sector’s response to COVID-19 continue to be guided by measures announced by the command council and the Cabinet as contained in regulations pronounced by various Ministers.

Therefore, at all material times, our measures are equally guided by the strategic logic of the national COVID-19 risk adjusted strategy. Whatever we do in the PSET sector, our responsibility, first and foremost, is to lower the infection curve. Secondly, to save the academic year, but not at the expense of the first consideration and thirdly, and more importantly, avoid worsening the infection curve. We equally want to use the sciences to serve our people adequately. We therefore adopted the theme, #SaveTheAcademicYear and #Save Lives.

Amongst our recourse to save the academic year is the use of information and communications technology, ICT, to deliver our programmes online. However, the process laid bare the digital divide between those institutions that have better ICT infrastructure than others, between institutions with some being far better equipped and experienced on ICTs than others and between students within the same institution – the well- off who live in urban areas and the poor in rural areas who can barely afford to access the internet, when and if it is available.

It is also true that the crisis has provided an opportunity to all institutions to quickly improve and maximise their ICT operations. To minimise the inequalities perpetuated by the epidemic in the PSET sector, we mobilised all our institutions to implement blended learning - a mixture of face-to-face and online learning, as we gradually move along various levels of the lockdown and post the lockdown period in order to increase access and improve learning.

The essence of our challenge as we implement measures directed at COVID-19 can be put thus: ***“***We are constrained by the very same challenges we seek to address, poverty, inequality and unemployment”. Since the announcement of COVID-19 measures,

our new challenges now can be characterised as the fourfold developmental challenges of COVID-19, the economic crisis and the multiple crises of social reproduction and climate change. As a sector, we used COVID-19 as an opportunity to confront and overcome the structural features of our economy.

In all our response strategies, we ensured that no student is left behind, and that all our PSET institutions are safe and do not pose risk for the transmission of the virus.

Working with Higher Health we ramping up education of all students and son COVID-19 and COVID-19 screening, testing, self-isolation, contact tracing and linkage to care support for all students and staff entering the campuses post reopening. Further to this, Higher Health deployed additional infrastructure both in the form of daily screening for all students and staff entering our campuses as well as additional infrastructure towards increasing essential clinical and psychosocial health services.

We ensured that all our COVID-19 measures do not temper or affect the quality of qualifications offered by all our PSET institutions. The measures have only affected the methodology of offering programmes by institutions, to what is known as

augmented learning using multi-learning methodology. We also had to ensure the physical delivery of learning materials as one aspect of our multimodal approach. The extent to which physical delivery was implemented depended on each university’s assessment of the number of students that require this kind of support.

Through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, we have to provide laptops to 68% of the general student population. The Minister will be officiating on the official launch of the NSFAs Digital Learning Device Project at the South Cape TVET College, George campus. We also proved data to university students on average across the system - 94% of undergraduate students were provided with data. Only contact NSFAS students funded under the Department of Higher Education and Training budget, who are currently registered for the 2021 academic year at universities and TVET colleges qualify to receive a device.

We also have the responsibility to address the question of skills development and unemployment. In our country, most of the challenges pertaining to education and skills deficit are substantially inherited from the apartheid system. The majority of young people leave the education system without

much opportunity to access post-school education and training, hence the assertion that skills shortage in South Africa is one of the factors contributing to the plight of unemployment. Our goal as a higher education, science and innovation sector is to reposition our country not just to be a consumer of knowledge but also to be a producer of knowledge and new innovation.

I am delighted to point out that in our own strategies regarding the skills development and innovation strategies, we have placed emphasis on interventions to allow a large number of young people to access opportunities within our skills development sector to ensure that they are able to be absorbed into high potential growth sectors of our economy in order to boost job creation. Similarly, we are called ... [Interjections.] ... Similarly, we are called upon to develop interventions to support the reskilling of workers so as to prevent further job losses in support of an inclusive economic growth.

In our own skills strategy, the very first intervention is access to targeted skills programmes, with part of actions in this intervention focussing on digital economy and digital skills. We have identified digital economy in our economic

reconstruction and recovery plan and skills strategy because digital skills cut across all of our economic activities.

Skills that we are strongly upon through our skills strategy, include big data analytics, software development, social media, internet of things, block chain, automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, augmented reality and cyber-security, data analysis and science, cloud computing and machine learning. We have trained 770 apprentices at our 26 Centres of Specialisation at different technical and vocational education and training institutions in 13 priority trades with 130 participating employers. A further 1 000 young people started in this year with apprentices. Technical and vocational education and training colleges are being supported to be trade test centres for occupational trades.

In response to the President’s state of the nation address, sector education and training authorities, Setas, have set targets to respond to the National Skills Development Plan and contribute to the post-school education and training system.

Amongst others, four Setas that are involved with artisans and engineering interventions have set targets for the Medium-Term Strategic Framework. Through our Setas, we made commitments to fund employers that partner with TVET colleges to take more

apprentices as part of the skills strategy to support the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

Funding of eligible learners will be done through discretionary grants given to employers and institutions of higher learning. Sector education and training authorities will also fund programmes or projects aimed at developing high level skills such as managers, associate professionals and artisans, amongst others.

As I conclude, I would like encourage our young people to identify opportunities within the various sectors that we offer as a department, which includes universities, TVET colleges, community education and training colleges and within the Setas. This will help them to be able to participate within the skills revolution of our country and to increase their chances to be employed or to be employers. This government has placed young people at the centre of our education and skills strategy, and we will never fail them. We take them out of the doldrums which were created by an ugly apartheid system. Let’s celebrate and commemorate June 16 but through these practical interventions, we believe that we are moving South Africa forward. Thank you very much, House Chair. [Interjections.]

Mr I NTSUBE: Hon Chairperson of the Council, hon Chief Whip of the Council and hon Deputy Minister. The youth in the world have always played a propelling role in the society. They are not only a strategic focus for the nations to build a stronger future, but a propelling force for transformation and revolution. It was the youth, a generation of 1944, led amongst others, by Anton Lembede, A P Mda, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu, who contributed significantly to the struggle of liberation.

This generation used education to realise freedom in their lifetime as spectrum of ... [Inaudible.] ... of discovering their generational mission and then fulfilling it or betraying it. Today in 2021, we can confidently affirm that the youth of 1944 did fulfil their generational mission. This mission was realised through pioneering leadership of youth of 1994, with Oliver Tambo leading the ANC during the darkest period of our liberation struggle, and Nelson Mandela being the first elected President of democratic South Africa.

Hon members, their mission was fulfilled 50 years later. Indeed, youth are a motive force of transformation and revolution. We, the youth of today, have committed ourselves to a generational mission of economic freedom in our lifetime.

It is a pivotal generational mission because it recognises the need to realise the democratic dividends of creating a better life for all. The economy of the country continues to be in the hands of the few, and likely reflect a colonialism of a special type, where the former oppressor continues to have hold on the economy.

Hon members, higher education has always been a site of struggle and should continue to be one. During the dark days of liberation after 1950 Suppression of Communism Act, and the ANC 1960, it was the youth in higher education and schools that kept the struggle of liberation in motion through SA Student Organisation, SASO and the Congress of South African Students, COSAS. It was the youth that went to exile to be trained for armed struggle after 1976 uprising.

Hon Chairperson, 60% of Africa’s youth population is below the age of 25, whilst in South Africa, is over 17,8 million youth between the ages of 18 and 34, constituting almost one third of population, are youth. This youth bulge needs to be channelled into the mainstream of the economy and contribute to the economic fortunes of a nation, and to also respond to their material conditions of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Hon Deputy Minister, the recent quarterly labour

force survey shows that, approximately 3,3 million of 10,2 young people between ages 15 to 24, were not in employment, education or training, with a 1,4% in increase, compared to the first quarter of 2020.

This means that, over 3,3 youth below the age of 24, are idling in their homes, villages and township, not doing anything productive for their development. Post schooling, education and training, PSET, is important sector, as it equips the youth with various knowledge and skills. Skills development which is critical component of PSET sector, should be massified to ensure that our youth are involved in programmes which will equip them with the skills to participate in the economy as workers and creators of workers.

The monopolist structures of our economies and the impediment for economic growth. We need to encourage our youth to gain skills which can create sustainability for them. A young person with artisan skills, a plumber, a constructor, an electrician, digital content developer and other recognition skills, should be able to provide services for household and the businesses within their communities. Skills development is important, not only to get jobs, but for self-employment to create incomes. We need to encourage the youth to obtain a

skill they need to trade in order to make an income. Reliance on income is not feasible for all in our country.

Hon Chairperson, for the youth of South Africa, a relationship between the level of schooling and unemployment, exists.

Participation in the economy requires skills job opportunities in the economy which are based on a need for skill, hence the expansion of higher education by the ANC government is a progress we should all applaud. The youth of our country should not be languishing and seated in the street corners, or be vulnerable to alcoholism, drug abuse, forming and participating in gangs, and doing things that do not positively contribute to their development.

The state remains the biggest purchasers of goods and services in the economy. Therefore, the ANC position on public procurement in being a transformational tool to distribute income assets, is progressive. Youth set aside are important to ensure that young entrepreneurs are able to get business opportunities to grow their enterprises and great sustainable enterprises that can compete in the market. Development financial institutions should have affordable interest rates for youth, in order to encourage the youth to be involved in

entrepreneurship. They should also have a strong link with higher education institutions.

Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment, BBBEE, should mainstream youth and women. The youth has got longer economic activity lifespan than any productive age, therefore, empowering youth is to invest in a population group which will continue to contribute in economy for decades to come. Like the generation of 1944, we should prepare the youth for the society we aspire. An egalitarian society where all South Africans have access to opportunities and political economy, which enables equitable distribution of assets and income, not only basis of race and gender.

Free education is a national imperative. As the ANC, we welcome the implementation of fee free higher education for the poor. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, supports thousands of South Africans annually and continues to change the lives of the poor. The innovation in the country will be enhanced when government increases its investment in the youth to pursue research and innovation of products and services in this changing world, which is increasingly being dependant on digital technology.

Our youth should be capacitated to be active participants of cutting edge development in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Hon Chairperson, this is strategic task of the state in ensuring that the development of youth and to advance the social economic transformation ... [Inaudible.] ... The task of learning is the task that youth should focus on. The ANC government should fast continue mainstreaming youth empowerment in its programmes, and through providing free education for the poor and working class which cannot afford higher education.

In conclusion, hon Chairperson, in the midst of COVID-19, load shedding and the recent privatisation of SA Airways, SAA, the fundamental question remains, hon Buti Manamela, like Lenin did ask in Russia, what needs to be done? Thank you very much, hon Chairperson of the Council.

*Xitsonga*:

Man B MATHEVULA: Ndza khensa Mutshamaxitulu. Mutshamaxitutlu

...

*English:*

... it is now 45 years since a white government shot and killed hundreds of South African students whose only sin was

to call for the scraping of Afrikaans as the language of instruction. They youth of this country as always craved for education because they know that without education, they will live lives of suffering and pain.

However, as the apartheid government of 1976, did to young people, so is the ANC government doing in 2021. You do not have to shoot them with guns, although you too often do. When the youth of this generation fought for free quality education, the ANC government shot at them, arrest many and kill some. Today, Lukhanyo Matinise is in jail for fighting for free quality education. The state has never forgiven the student who exposed the systemic criminal act of the ANC in ignoring the youth of this country. Many are still going to courts, many have criminal records and cannot be employed anywhere and their only sin was to ask for access to institutions of higher learning. What the ANC is doing to young people in this country is not different from what apartheid did in 1976.

Today, 74% of young people who are eligible to work, cannot find work in this country. These are overwhelmingly young black people. If they were white the ANC would have done something. The ANC hates black people and it hate black youth

even more. South African black youth who should be the bedrock of socioeconomic life are trapped in a system that seeks their destruction. At school they have to face their daily dehumanisation of having to study under space in the Eastern Cape, or of having to study without textbooks in the Limpopo, or of having unqualified teachers teaching them in college at KwaZulu-Natal University. For those who are lucky enough to access those institutions they must put up with systems that does not seek to build them into confident and competent human beings, rather they are seen as cash cows for the university and get kicked out when they can no longer afford to pay.

In the workplaces, for those who are lucky enough to work, South African youths face daily struggle for dehumanisation exploitation with minimal pay. The South African youth are the most vulnerable to unemployment, to diseases and to crimes because the ANC government has not presented and implemented any vision for ensuring full participation of young people in the economy. As things stands, the young people are loitering around the street because they are unemployed and unemployable. Most youth are in jail because the economic system would not have them anywhere else. Education is the ultimate decider of whether one is employed or not. You are more likely to find employment if you have qualification. So,

what we are saying is that, as the ANC continue to neglect education, it threatens the very basis of the future of this country.

The Economic Freedom Fighters has always been clear about what needs to be done to fully incorporate young people to the economic life of this country. We need the state to provide the free quality decolonised education which will break the inter-racial colonial curses condemning black people to lifetime or glorified slavery? Young black people with full access to qualify education will have no initiative to resort to crime and will contribute immensely to the development of our country.

We need to reopen teaching and nursing colleges which were foolishly closed by the ANC. This will ensure that from their basic level, our education system is of good enough quality. This will also ensure that rural young people have access to good quality health care provided by professionally trained nurses. We cannot do all these things if we continue being led by corrupt old men who know nothing about contemporary youth challenges. The EFF is the only party that offer visionary alternatives for all. We call on all young people across the country to take the future into their own hands. The youth

have all the power to vote the corrupt slot out of power. When the time of voting comes, the youth must rise and kick this bodyguard of white supremacy out of power.

*Xitsonga*:

Ndza khensa,

*English*:

Chair.

Ms F HASSAN (Gauteng): Hon Chairperson, hon Ministers, hon Chief Whip, MECs, hon members and special delegates, and of course, the most important stakeholder, the people of South Africa, on the 14th of October 2015 and again in 2016, I was part of a collective of students who took to the streets and put our bodies on the line in the name of a free quality and decolonised education. Something that the Progressive Youth Alliance conceptualised well before the existence even of the EFF. We know that movement now as the “Fees Must Fall”.

We faced extreme police brutality and discrimination from university institutions. We choked on tear gas, our ears rang from stun grenades and the screams of protestors, we ran and hid from rubber bullets, water cannons and all manner of

public order policing and tactical reaction units. Many students lost everything. Many were expelled and suspended, and some even went to jail for this cause. But we did not relent.

Why then in a post democratic South Africa did we as young people have to fight so hard? Because we understood what access to education and skills development meant when you come from poverty and stark inequality. Because we knew that having an expensive, elitist, and basically inaccessible education system that we inherited from our oppressors meant that millions would have the doors of learning closed to them and ultimately be unable to change their lived experiences and that of their families for the better. This was a cause we were and are currently willing to put our lives on the line for.

Even now a quick scroll through the timeline on various social media platforms will show you the hopelessness of young people in our country. Young people are losing faith in the system and its inability to give them a meaningful life. And that is why, today is not just a debate for us. It is not academic or a check box exercise, it is about our lives as young people that are on the line.

The history of South Africa is one that has clearly showed us how a people can be stripped of dignity and lifetime opportunity by not having a good enough education and skills development programme. What is very important is that we also haven’t structurally changed higher education enough especially not in terms of the decolonial discourse. Speaking as a soon to be former national student leader I am going to share some experiences with you, because sometimes I think we are detached as lawmakers in this space, sometimes we forget what happens on the ground based on the decisions we make in this hon Houses.

Imagine a black woman student from the rural Eastern Cape, let’s call her Noxolo. Noxolo manages to overcome the barriers of poverty and access to higher education but she performs well enough academically to get into a Wits University. She walks in, huge achievement on its own, probably the first time in a big city because of spatial apartheid, she is not prepared for the major culture shift. She is forced to study in a language foreign to her, English is mostly like her second or third language and it is also a medium of instruction in most universities. She cannot afford the fees so has had to get a bursary and a loan. Sometimes these bursaries cover the full cost of study, sometimes not -

especially not at the Wits University where you would have to get a top up because the fees are higher.

I have even come across many cases many of them where the stipends given to poor students is sent home to their families to put food on the table. Therefore, meaning the student has nothing left for themselves.

The poverty experienced in society is not insulated in the higher education space. The university space has not decolonised enough to have sufficiently realise that students such as Noxolo needs extra assistance and help to bridge the gap from a commodified and unequal education system where not all students have the same opportunities or playing ground.

This leads to greater dropout rates at a first-year level, especially for engineering and the sciences.

COVID-19 has exacerbated this problem and has exposed the structural difficulties that universities in this country refused to accept. Despite many attempts from both the national department to intervene, universities have consistently refused to help us as youths student activists trying to level the playing fields. Let us never forget that these debates and these discussions have a major impact on the

ground on the lives of our people. And I thought it was important to just mention that first before I even get into youth development.

We know that youth development has major and numerous definitions ranging from physical and emotional well-being to skills development and access to job opportunities. But that is precisely why youth development is no singular thing. It is a combination of elements and pathways that build young people beyond where they are now.

The bitter truth is that we as young people were always told that we must work hard, go to school and then university and we will get a good job. Unfortunately, that is now a fallacy. Obtaining tertiary qualifications, no longer guarantees you a job as evidenced in the growing graduate unemployment rate.

And in fact, even before COVID-19, the numbers were starting to indicate that independent of education level, the youth unemployment rates were disproportionately high relative to other age groups and even youth in other countries.

This tells us that fundamentally it is not enough to reduce youth development and opportunities to educations and skills development alone. That we need to rethink what we consider to

be youth development in our society, and that a greater intervention is required. A multi-pronged intervention in fact, one that does focus on education and skills but also takes into account young people who are not in any form of education and training – arguably the majority of youth in our country.

To rub salt in the wound of young people like myself, the youth jobless rate based on the expanded definition now stands at a horrifying 74,7%. Effectively, this means that only one in four school leavers who are under the age of 24 have a job in South Africa. This is staggering. As a young public representative speaking on behalf of millions of young people in this country, particularly in Gauteng I cannot sit here and pretend that we are not in a national crisis. Seventy-four point seven percent of joblessness amongst young people in this country should give us all sleepless nights especially as policy makers and representatives in the public. We know that growing unemployment means poverty, hunger and inequality.

What is also becoming clearer is that youth development through access to free higher education while it is vital and important, will mean nothing if we have extremely educated and skilled people with nowhere to go and unable to build our

country or our economy. This means that the process of upskilling and educating young people must work hand in glove with the labour market. Demand must be created for that youth development. No matter how well a programme trains a young person, if there are limited jobs, young people are unlikely to be employed and unlikely to break poverty cycles.

Another angle that must be addressed in terms of this discussion is the skills mismatch present in our country. Are we educating and skilling young people for what we most need in our economy? Today, the *Business Tech* wrote and published an entire article where they found that on an annual basis demand for professionals in the sales, Information and Communications Technology, ICT, specifically software development, business management, finance and the building and construction sectors have grown significantly.

There also need to be a focus on skills development specifically on entrepreneurship and the ability to start our own businesses. We need young people to move from being job seekers to job creators. And this is something we need to start from a basic education level. However, all is not lost, young people are ready to be a vital part of our economy in our education system.

In December 2017, it was the ANC-led government that announced what we as student activists and student leaders had been fighting tooth and nail for – the realisation of free quality education at least for the poor and working class. The National Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, and government funding for higher education were converted from loans to bursaries.

And in 2018 the first crop of students were able to taste free education. This is not to say that there were no challenges.

There are many. We will be the first to call them out, the administration of NSFAS has been a problem. The Deputy Minister spoke to this as well. It is something that the Ministry intervened about. We always knew that there would be growing pains in the system but there is commitment and action to fix this. Something that opposition parties conveniently fail to mention.

In terms of the Gauteng situation, we know Gauteng as the economic heart of the country there are many interventions being put in place to centre youth development on a number of levels. The first being partnerships between universities and government departments to create research driven interventions but also create feeders between higher education and the public sector. This is pushed on the highest level through the office of the Premier, hon David Makhura.

We also have the Tshepo One Million Programme in partnership with Harambee is also a fundamental programme of youth development in the province. It brings together the public sector, the private sector, and young people to open opportunities for work internships and longer term placements. That is also a discussion that we need to have around sustainable job opportunities and not just short-term internships. People want long-term sustainable employment.

Apart from that the focus is also on identifying specific interventions in the workforce pathway and assisting in that regard. We understand that young people who have certain levels of education require different interventions as opposed to young people who only have matric. And this is perhaps where this programme is particularly important. Because it identifies that there is a different approach required for each and every young group.

Just yesterday, I heard on the radio on Yfm in particular, an interview with a Tshepo One Million Programme recipient who was a former drug addict who has turned his life around. The programme however is currently under severe scrutiny from the portfolio committee as we are committed to performing sharp

oversight but more importantly ensuring all programmes are as effective as they should be.

Our Gauteng City Region Academy, GCRA, and youth development sub-unit within the Gauteng Department of Education also serves as a blueprint for the whole country. Right now, underway is the process of main streaming all of our different youth development programmes to ensure no one is working in a silo. Many other provinces can take lessons from this particularly the Western Cape who always claims to have the lowest unemployment rate. That is not true, and the lowest unemployment rates are in Gauteng and the best job opportunities are also in Gauteng. More importantly, people are able to earn for the same job in Gauteng as well.

As I come to a conclusion, let me say it is always darkest before dawn. We knew that COVID-19 was going to have a severe effect on the unemployment levels, we knew that young people were going to be most hard-hit, and as we predicted, we are where we are. That being said, there are major interventions in place. And we as young people will be at the forefront of driving those interventions whether we are as young public representatives, whether we are as student activists or student leaders whether it is as young people on the ground.

But let us not assume that young people are apathetic and are waiting for handouts. Young people are ready to lead and we are ready to take over the economy. I thank you.

Mr R ALLEN (Western Cape): Hon Chairperson, I trust that I am audible.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Yes, yes, you are audible.

Mr R ALLEN (Western Cape): Hon Chairperson of the NCOP, hon members of the NCOP, ladies and gentlemen and importantly young people streaming in, I consider it an honour to be participating in today’s debate and during the Youth Month. It is not nearly enough to honour the class of 1976, a class of young people who paid a great price towards the freedoms we enjoy today.

It is incumbent on us to do so much more as the class of 1976 started some countrywide uprisings in defiance of a brutal and inhumane system. The lyrics of a song entitled *Freedom* by Beyoncé states, “*I brake change all by myself, won’t let my freedom rot in hell. I may keep running because a winner won’t quit on themselves.”*

Hon Chairperson, the youth of South Africa is crying for fair opportunities. Similar to the years leading up to the 1976 uprisings. During that time the authorities turned a blind eye, we dare not do so now.

In some circles a certain stereotype exist that young people are not responsible or that young people have no ambition.

However, I am here today, to state categorically, to state emphatically and dogmatically that most young people live responsible lives. All young people have dreams and aspirations.

I am mesmerised Chairperson, at how young people unify around broadly shared goals, hopes and ideals. Young people crave a descent start in education and they crave an opportunity to get ahead. Parliament needs to give young people the hope and the will to preserve. Often against the odds, young people rise to the occasion.

As a young person myself, we are genuinely committed and equally impatient to put the rights and the wrongs of our broken society. A society in which the rate of youth unemployment has increased since the last quarter and currently sits at 63,3%. Roughly 1,335 million young people

between the ages of 15 and 24. This is an increase of 4,3% year-on-year. It does not stop there, for the age group between 25 and 34, youth unemployment stands at a whopping 41,3%. Roughly 2,96 million young people. This means that on average, the youth unemployment rate is 52,2% for the age group between 15 and 34-years-old.

Chairperson, this is despite the fact that our current generation of young people is the most innovative and digitally survey generation. So, why are we experiencing these high-levels of youth unemployment?

I could name the inefficiency of the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, which is nowhere to be seen or because of the continued regulations on the economy without a proper recovery plan or because of the bailouts on state-owned entities that year-on-year milk out the fiscus. Like Eskom that literary paid out R56 for two litre bottle of milk.

State-owned entities like Eskom procure goods and services at a ridiculous mark up, compared to normal wholesale retail prices.

Chairperson, I doubt that there is any young person that will purchase a wooden mop for a staggering R238 000 as Eskom did.

Which is R237 900 more than the actual price. Or better yet, a quick search on a wooden mop and you will find one for R49,00. Does Eskom think that young people think that those mobs are going to mop up the entire ocean? However, other purchases at Eskom spends a R140 billion for procuring goods and services included the payment of R28,00 for a roll of single ply toilet paper. Any person could have at least got two ply toilet rolls for that price.

Chairperson, I guess when staff heats the fern you probably need toilet paper. However, in March this year, Eskom told the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Scopa that they would need R1 billion from the national government, every week in 2021, to remain operational.

Hon Chairperson through you, to the young people of South Africa, this translate to R6 million an hour. Despite claims, it remains unlikely that Eskom will be profitable by 2023.

However, let me dig deeper into the topic, youth development through access to free higher education and expanded access to skills development, the DA is on record to state that the fee free-higher education is a socialist dream, but a real world nightmare.

The burning issue of the higher education funding should be considered against the ANC’s national democratic revolution where qualifying students cannot register and the entire university system is on hold, because National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, is underfunded by R6,8 billion. All the while the ANC government has spent R27 billion, bailing out the SA Airways, SAA, in the last two years and it is needing another R5 billion, this year in terms of the Business Rescue Plan.

The truly progressive approach to funding higher education in South Africa is to implement a student loan system where commercial banks via NSFAS provide either full or partial bank loans according to household’s income.

Chairperson, we should not forego the tendency to speak about young people and about youth as if they are all the same. The belittling pretext is that we as Members of Parliament, MPs and Members of the Provincial Legislature, MPLs, need to do something for young people, not with them.

It is fundamental era of the national government in framing policies that affect young people. The previous speaker even alluded to it and highlighted some of those aspects. However,

here in the Western Cape we do not treat youth policy as a distraction or single aspect. We drive the youth policy everywhere in the provincial government. That is why the Western Cape’s working age population increased by 1,9% to during the first quarter of 2021. To the previous speaker, that is indeed the largest increase nationally and now stands at 4,796 million young people.

Chairperson, as a young man, a gentleman with the name of Allan Vermeulen aged 24, that grew up in the same area as I did in Mitchells Plain in Cape Town, co-founded a digital App that is data free on any mobile device. The application is called Lato. They help unemployed young people become more employable. This App is designed to incentivize, to track and to increase positive behaviour, by users who do voluntary work in their own communities. This young people then receives Lato points by completing small jobs in their communities while gaining work experience. Young people are then able to exchange those points received, for vouchers to buy food, electricity and clothing to assist in their households. As Lato has assisted over a 100 000 young people.

In 2016, Alan form part of the team of RLabs that launched youth cafes in the Western Cape in partnership with the

Western Cape Social Development, because here in the Western Cape we support sporting federations with an emphasis of promoting marginalised groups, we work towards expanding sports clubs and the athletes in order to keep young people off the streets. Furthermore, the Western Cape Education Department, is starting a robotics and coding pilot project in selected schools. This include one in Mitchells Plain’s Pine Road High, which is already piloting the scratch coding programme as part of the technology subjects for Grades 8 and

9 learners.

We drew further in terms of the year beyond the programme which include where we provide 500 volunteers per annum with experience and in training. The event will be then escalated to provide 6 000 learners with academic support in literature, numeracy and life skills.

We further seek to reach 1 000 young people and 10 000 learners to strengthen the capacity of the youth offices to provide holistic support to young people on the programme.

We do so much more in terms of the youth safety ambassador programme which during the month of April this year, we continued to sign contracts and induct young people between

the ages of 18 and 35 for work opportunities through the province. We have further helped 600 people sign contracts and they were inducted. We go further where we seek to have 1 000 people signed and placed for the next 12 months.

We even go further Chairperson where there is a programme called “The Eye on the Child programme.” which seeks to improve the co-operation of communities concerning child abuse and enable them to effectively manage any abuse, neglect and exploitation in order for those young people to take whole of the opportunities and to become part of our society in a more meaningful way.

Chairperson, as we celebrate Youth Month and honour the young people of 1976, it is apparent that young people are standing up, are being counted, are mobilising and marching. However, one thing is certain that this Parliament has the responsibility to ensure that the young people and their hopes and dreams are honoured.

The first person to open this debate here today, maybe she must be the Minister in order to implement the DA difference at the national level and we would be able to see effective change. We see here today the ANC speaking against the ANC.

The ANC march against the ANC and young people are seeing that, it is time for a new government, a government that is led by the DA. I thank you Chairperson.

Ms F NKOMONYE (Eastern Cape): Good day hon House Chair, Deputy Minister for Higher Education, Science and Innovation, hon members of the NCOP, Special Delegates and young people of South Africa. Let me take this opportunity on behalf of the people of the Eastern Cape, known as the Home of the Legends to greet you all. This year we mark 45 years since the Soweto Uprisings, a historical landmark that signifies the successive youth struggles that shape the history of our country.

Hon Chair, June 16 1976 is by the highlight of the immense role played by the young people in the struggle to liberate our country. These young people injected new life into the national liberation movement in the 1940s. To them swelling the ranks of uMkhonto weSizwe in the 1960s right through to the roaring lions in the 1980s who rendered South Africa ungovernable and made apartheid unworkable.

Standing here today, we pay homage to these brave young people who dared teargas, live ammunition, detention without trial, torture and difficult conditions in the military camps.

*IsiZulu:*

Namhlanje-ke ...

*English:*

... I am not sure hon Chair, whether I am still audible. I see gestures from yourself. Thank you so much, hon Chair.

*IsiZulu:*

Namhlanje-ke ...

*English:*

... we invoke the memory of those fallen heroes not to glorify the past but ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... simemelela kwimimoya yabo ukuba namhlanje babe kunye nathi ...

*English:*

... as we face today’s challenges.

*IsiXhosa:*

Siyazikhumbuza ke ukuba babengamaqhawe, bengamakroti ...

English:

... so that we can daringly face today’s difficulties. The challenges we face today may seem insurmountable ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... kodwa kuba sizalwa ngamaqhawe ...

*English:*

... and as such overcoming those challenges runs deep in our blood. In South Africa the youth constitutes the majority of our population. Bearing this in mind, young people continue to face serious challenges and key amongst them is the problem of unemployment. It is not an understatement that this challenge has reached crisis proportions. The picture even gets gloomy when you consider the staggering numbers of those who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training, NEET.

The unemployment rate is typical high with youth in rural areas facing challenges that are different from those living in urban areas. In addition, hon Chair, young people with disabilities continue to face enormous challenges in the labour market as they are more likely to be socially excluded and marginalised.

Imeko yaba bantu batsha ...

*English:*

... has been made worse by the outbreak of Covid-19 which is threatening their lives and survival. Without lamenting to the problems we have to accept that we are in a crisis and as such it cannot be business as usual. We have to act decisively and develop innovative solutions to these challenges. Right at the centre of youth unemployment crisis is two key elements that I want us to focus on, namely, the economic growth to enable the economy to create more jobs as well as skills development to address the mismatch between the employment opportunities and the available skills.

The structural mismatch of skills between labour demand and supply has for the past 27 years favoured highly skilled individuals while the majority of the unemployed are low skilled. As the skills revolution is needed to reverse the fortunes of young people but it cannot take changes in the structure of the economy which requires the limited number of workers in the capital intensive industry. An economy that prioritises high level skills and displaces low level skills labour means high unemployment in the midst of the goal.

Kule minyaka engama-27 ...

*English:*

... the democratic government introduced a number of policies and programmes to reconstruct a responsive education system and shape it to reflect the democratic vision and values.

Gross enrolment of children on compulsory school going ages has increased from 51% in 1994 to now almost universal school enrolment of the ages of between seven and 15 years. There are more than 800 000 learners below the age of six in Grade R and many more keep getting into our Early Childhood Development, ECDs. The learner performance in Grade 12, National Senior Certificate has increased from 58% to in 1994 to 78,2% in 2018. We have almost doubled the number of special schools for children with disabilities and special needs.

These statistics hon members, clearly indicate that we are well in our way to fully implement the clause in the Freedom Charter that speaks to the opening doors of learning and culture. The total university enrolment has also doubled and now it stands to over a million. As also been considered as the considerable expansion of vocational sector since 1994

with the Tvet college enrolment increasing from 367 000 in 1999 to almost a million in 2019.

Once there is a need produce 30 000 artisans per year as per the National Development Plan vision 2030 target, the system is still not yet towards this target. I think hon Deputy Minister we ought to move faster in that regard. However, the system as a whole progressed very slowly in implementing learnerships and internship with most Sector Education and Training Authorities, Setas resorting to funding skills programmes that are short courses and mostly do not lead to employment for the young people that are unemployed.

The Fees Must Fall movement which demanded the decolonisation of the education, to be made freely available to all students in the public universities also resulted in government’s announcement of an allocation of more than R57 billion of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF to fund the free education for students who come from poor or working class families.

To ensure economic participation and transformation, government has implemented several public employment programmes which target youth. These would include community

works programmes, expanded youth programmes, National Rural Youth Co-ops, Youth Co-operatives and Youth Entrepreneurship which is funded through the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution demands that the youth be equipped with the technological and digital skills. According to Butler Adam, artificial intelligence will of course tamper with the number of jobs and replace some of them. More than half of today’s job is becoming automated within the coming next 35, we need to do more in terms of introducing the digital inclusion of South African youth though we still have challenges, particularly in provinces that are not covered in terms of the network connectivity.

The failure of government to connect all schools means many students are locked out from using technology to learn or being equipped to take part in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 4IR. The curriculum changes to prepare learners for 4IR will have limited impact if the country does not ensure that all schools are connected and data costs are reduced. Given all these challenges, we should advocate for a speedily implementation of the National Youth Policy recommendations particularly the following recommendations: we

ought to eliminate the digital divide and make sure that all schools have access to internet or free data, lay a foundation for the creation of future entrepreneurs by equipping learners with entrepreneur skills. Spot and creative arts industries have a potential to contribute towards the economy of South Africa and these are particularly appealing to the young people.

*IsiXhosa:*

Ndikhunjuzwa ke Sihlalo weNdlu, ngohloniphekileyo u-Allen eqhayisa apha ukuba urhulumente waseNtshona Koloni ...

*English:*

... is doing much more working with sports federations in developing their clubs. Allow me hon House Chairperson ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... njengomntu omele iphondo leengqwele nam ndiqhayise ndimlinganise.

*English:*

Allow me to honour young men who hail from the province of the Eastern Cape. Aphelele who is 17 years old has been just signed by the T S Galaxy, Sango Xhamlashe, from the rural

areas of Engcobo, a captain of the TUT Varsity Rugby Club who has won, together with his team, a Varsity Challenge. Siya Kolisi, the captain of the Springboks, Siyabonga Scara Ntubeni, Lukhanyo Am, Makazole Maphimpi, Yawo Mpenxa, Aphelele Fasi and Sanele Nohamba. All these young men particularly from Siya Kolisi are forming part of the Springbok. Hon Chair, we have gone far than developing only at the club level. We continuously contribute as the province of the Eastern Cape in the transformation of the sporting sector.

Another recommendation of the National Youth Policy is that each district must have a technical and vocational training high school. All post school institutions should be inclusive and must ensure that the learners with disabilities have a right to be accommodated. Thank you so much, Chairperson.

Ms S SHAIKH: Greetings hon Chairperson, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, hon Buti Manamela, hon members and fellow South Africans, we are celebrating 150 years of Mama Charlotte Maxeke and we need to appreciate the role of women in the struggle for liberation. Mama Maxeke has demonstrated that women have equal capabilities and are equally endowed like all persons. As the African National Congress, we welcome the appointment of women as Vice Chancellors with Prof Puleng

Lenkabula being the latest. We call on the department to ensure that women lead faculties and be appointed to various academic positions in these faculties. Our higher education sector is one of the critical sectors in improving our human development capabilities. In order to realise a better future for all South Africans, we need to ensure our country develops the skills of all people for social and economic development. The transformation of the higher education sector is thus an imperative for our nation.

During the midst of the global coronavirus pandemic, we have observed the continued abuse of women and the girl child.

Gender-based violence and femicide has become a second pandemic in our society, as characterised by the President Ramaphosa. It is characterised as such because it requires the people of South Africa, government and all social partners to specifically focus on defeating these social ills in our workplaces, homes, schools, universities, colleges, public transport and in the streets. This is not just a mere social issue, but it affects the security of the nation and tests our justice system. The protection and safety of women and the girl child due to the patriarchal nature of our society is a priority of the ANC government. Since the democratic government, the ANC has been mainstreaming women and youth in,

education leadership, governance and procurement. These are some of the strategic area’s government seeks to use to economically develop youth and women.

Hon Chair, the National Assembly recently adopted three crucial pieces of legislation that are aimed at fighting gender-based violence and femicide, namely: The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill, and the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill. The adoption of these important Bills in the NA on 3rd of June 2021 is a milestone for South Africa as the country is continuously faced with the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide. These Bills are currently with the NCOP for concurrence.

Hon Chair, in our higher education system, the problem of sex for marks continues to persist which should concern the nation. This form of student abuse, particularly in female youth should be combatted. Universities and colleges should strengthen their implementation of sexual harassment policies and ensure awareness of such acts to promote reporting of such matters by victims. Another social issue affecting students are the new trends of sugar mommies and sugar daddies. This is blatant sexual exploitation of the youth due to their vulnerability and lack of financial resources. It has become a

trend in our society that older citizens target young boys and girls in exchange of money and other financial benefits. Hon Chair, we should speak against this tendency in our society, our value system should be embedded with principles of solidarity and empowerment of others without exploitation.

Hon Chair, rape incidents are reported in higher education institutions annually and the Department of Higher Education must institutionalise the higher health programmes to ensure that advocacy and social agency around various social ills are always advanced. It is also greatly disturbing that sexual harassment and rape incidents are also reported in our schools which are perpetrated by teachers. This points to the fact that reporting of such incidences to law enforcement should be enhanced to ensure that perpetrators are reported and arrested. We need to encourage the girl child and women to rapidly report gender-based violence incidents before they escalate to femicide. Teachers convicted of such heinous crimes shouldn’t be employed in the Public Service or any learning institution including private institutions.

Institutions of higher education need to ensure that they develop policies which manage the personal relationships between university and college staff with students. This is important to protect students and to ensure that institutions

are able to act on staff that are found to be developing and having improper relationships with students.

Hon Chair, racism continues to be imbedded in the higher education sector, particularly in universities. Universities which were designated for whites during apartheid continue to reflect the domination and enclave of untransformed academic and racial composition. Transforming our country requires the inclusion of the diversity of our nation in spaces of society. This enables the enriching of social transformation to imbue the values and principle of all South Africans with no discrimination. The transformation of institutional cultures of universities should embrace the diversity of the nation.

The implementation of Employment Equity Plans should ensure they include the empowerment of youth and women in strategic positions in the higher education sector. Hon Chair, there are institutions which do not comply with their employment equity targets. This is a key transformational tool which, if not complied with consequence management mechanisms should be enforced in the sector. The strength of our nation lies in our diversity.

Another critical role our institutions can play in our society is on issues of ethics. Corruption and fraudulent acts are becoming endemic in our Public Service and the private sector. Our institutions as key institutions which equip and develop youth should focus on developing ethical values and ethos of students. Institutions of higher education should also play a leading role through displaying in practice good corporate governance and ethical values. Furthermore, numerous universities, colleges and skills sector authorities have been embroiled in corruption practices due to narrow interests by those in positions of authority.

The sixth administration has placed the building of an ethical and capable developmental state, as a priority due to the extent of corruption in our society which is eroding the moral and social fabric of our nation. The Department of Higher Education working with law enforcement agencies should expedite the investigation on various issues of governance.

The department should also ensure consequence management becomes a normal practice in higher education to enable an efficient and sustainable expansion of higher education.

Hon Chair, these are just some of the injustices that young people encounter in institutions of learning and which have an

impact on their development. There is a need for embedding social justice in higher education and these institutions must transform. There is a need for the Department of Higher Education, institutions of learning, our justice system and society at larger to address these social ills. Our women, our youth need to be empowered to take action against injustices that they encounter. Hon Chair, youth development is also a responsibility of the youth themselves. Young people who are educated should also be involved in community development projects to empower other youth and learners. Before youth are students, they are members of the community and they should always understand their societal role in that context.

In conclusion, hon Chair, today is 19 years and two days since the passing on of Peter Mokaba, a roaring young lion and an embodiment of revolutionary resilience of youth at the time.

He used to encourage young people never to surrender to the enemy and to apartheid. One of his slogans was “Rather die to a man than let the enemy pass.” I called on all youth to stand steadfast and be inspired by the resilience and patriotism of Peter Mokaba. I thank you, hon Chairperson. [Applause.]

Ms C N RAKGOALE (Limpopo): Chairperson of the NCOP hon Amos Masondo, colleagues in the NCOP, good afternoon. It is an

honour and a privilege for me to participate in this national Youth Day debate. This debate takes place as we are heading towards the 16th of June, which will be marking the 45th anniversary of the 1976 youth uprising. The national Youth Month does not only remind all of us about the role and contribution of young people in the attainment of our democracy but this ... is a very important day. This day presents an opportunity for all of us to interrogate the status and challenges faced by our young people today. This day also presents an opportunity to look forward and work as a collective in empowering the young people of our country.

The senseless massacre directed against unarmed and defenceless school children was evidenced to the whole world. However, their deaths were not in vain as it accelerated the pace towards the demise of the regime. While bantu education was introduced in 1954, the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction is what led pupils to embark on a protest march, which was violently dispersed by the security police, leading to the death of Hector Pieterson and others.

We must recall that the Soweto uprising took place at a time when the ANC had adopted the four pillars around which our struggle for liberation was organised, namely the armed

struggle, mass mobilisation, the underground and international isolation. In the aftermath of the riots, many people were arrested and detained without trial as the security forces were looking for so-called instigators. This constant harassment led to a number of young people leaving the country to undergo military training outside the borders of South Africa, as they were intent on overthrowing the Botha and Malan regime by all means necessary.

I deliberately gave this brief background on the challenges that the youth of 1976 were faced with and how they sacrificed and endured police brutality. We all agree that today’s youth faces a different struggle. A struggle of lack of job opportunities and social ills such as substance abuse. Today’s topic affords us an opportunity to pause and reflect on the significant strides that have been made by the ANC-led government since it came into power in 1994.

This government also presents ... [Inaudible.] ... opportunities at various institutions of learning through various means, including the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS. The fact that the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation has significantly increased its spending on higher education over the last year, is an

indication that the government is determined to assist academically deserving young people to pursue various fields of study. In April this year, Minister Blade Nzimande said that this is primarily due to the increase in the number of students and an increased budget allocation by the government to fund the children of the poor and the working class through NSFAS. The Minister said that NSFAS funding increased by more than five-fold in only six years, from R5,9 billion in 2014 to R34,7 billion in 2020. In the current financial year, NSFAS funding is expected to reach over R43 billion, a further increase of close to R10 billion in just two years from 2020.

In my province of Limpopo, the government has done significantly well in opening the doors of learning for all. Limpopo has an impressive and vibrant Technical and Vocational

Education and Training, TVET, college sector with at least one TVET college in every region, and houses two universities in two districts, namely the University of Limpopo in the Capricorn District and the University of Venda in the Vhembe District.

We believe that education is the only weapon that will help to eradicate poverty in our communities, as well as unlock the doors of economic opportunities for the youth. We therefore

continue to urge all young people to take issues of education very seriously. They must emulate umama Charlotte Mannya Maxeke, who was the first black person to obtain a degree. Not just a black person but a black woman. Today’s ... coincides very well with the fact that the year 2021 has been declared the year of Charlotte Maxeke. Maxeke was among the freedom fighters who wanted to see the total emancipation of women and the realisation of a truly democratic South Africa. She wanted to see that our people are serviced, irrespective of race, culture and gender.

The youth of today should pay tribute to the sacrifices made by the 1976 generation. They should do so by ensuring that they utilise this hard-earned freedom to liberate themselves and the South African black person from the trenches of poverty, unemployment and inequality. To borrow from the words of Seaparankwe, the former President Nelson Mandela, who said during the second celebration of the 16th of June in the democratic era in 1995, “You were in the forefront of the liberation struggle. Today you must be in the forefront of reconstruction and development”.

This year, the commemoration is celebrated under the theme: Growing youth development for an inclusive and transformed

society. This theme reminds and directs all government departments and the private sector to redouble their efforts in creating job opportunities for young people. The recent Quarterly Labour Force Survey paints a bleak picture on the current state of affairs in relation to the lack of job opportunities in our country. It reveals that unemployment has yet again risen to an all-time high of 32,6% in the first quarter of this year. This is obviously having a ripple effect on livelihoods, poverty and hunger, as well as deepening high levels of inequality. The majority of young people are affected by this.

We must draw courage from the efforts that are being put in place for the youth by the ANC-led government, despite the tough economic conditions brought as a result of COVID-19. Delivering his budget in the Presidency on 2 June, President Ramaphosa said that to ensure that young people are empowered and equipped with the tools of success, the government created the co-ordination of efforts to address youth employment in the Presidency.

Our democratic government has made significant strides in intensifying youth development work in all spheres of government. However, we can’t shy away from the painful

reality that today more and more young people are also confronted with the triple challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Just on the first of this month, Statistics SA painted a bleak picture with regard to unemployment statistics in our country. In summary, Statistics SA says that South Africa’s unemployment rate jumped to a record high in the fourth quarter of last year. Besides the devastation caused by COVID-

19 in 2020, unemployment rose to 32,6% in the first quarter from 32,5% in the fourth quarter of 2020. This means that we have to come up with ways and means to troubleshoot this problem, which implies that the number of unemployed people now stands at 7 242 000. The majority of them are young people.

Coupled with the above is the fact that our country has the highest rate of COVID-19 infections on the continent. In addition, our country was under recession even before the outbreak of the pandemic.

It is therefore, in the context of the Limpopo province, that we developed the Limpopo Youth Development Strategy which gives the strategic framework within which issues of young

people are addressed. This strategy is aimed at ensuring that the youth is employable, and have active participation in the labour market and entrepreneurship. This is all done to allow the youth to participate in the mainstream economy. We have also introduced the Limpopo procurement strategy, which encourages all spheres of government to procure goods and services from young people so that we can achieve our goal of youth empowerment.

We reiterate our clarion call to all government departments, entities, municipalities and the private sector, to allow more budget to ... youth development programmes, to ensure the realisation of the vision of the Limpopo Youth Development Strategy.

The road ahead of us is long. There are no shortcuts to doing things the right way and there is nothing right in the things that are wrong. So, to the young people, I encourage you to take full advantage of the opportunities available and, when one of you happens to make a breakthrough in life, share with others, help others and build each other.

I think the message from the side of Limpopo ... I also would like to challenge my peers to support and encourage the youth

in their endeavours because if we neglect them, we would have failed to produce future leaders. Indeed, working together we can achieve much more. Let us continue the partnership to build the South Africa we all want. I thank you.

*Xitsonga*:

Ndza khensa.

*Tshivenḓa:*

Ndo livhuwa.

*Afrikaans*:

Mnr S F DU TOIT: Agb Voorsitter, rook, brandende bande, oorverdowende dreunsang en georganiseerde chaos met sommige jeug wat selfgeregverdig deelneem, verwoes, aandring, aangespreek word en hulself dan weer bejammer met verontskuldiging om die martelaars-rol te vertolk. Die vraag is, wat doen hierdie jeug om ’n positiewe bydrae te maak om die uitdagings aan te spreek en op te los?

*English*:

The past two weeks during the Budget Vote debates, we debated Vote No 17, Higher Education and Training, where the focus was on the failed NSFAS, the department’s R358 billion budget,

damaged caused by disgruntled students to universities to the tune of R32,79 million, TVET colleges without lecturers and the Public Protector’s investigations into, among others, R7,5 billion irregular expenditures. And yes, the ANC focused on the rights of students to protest and demand. The unfortunate truth is that South Africa is bleeding opportunities, bleeding job creation, bleeding skills development and mutual respect as a result thereof.

*Afrikaans*:

Wie is die jeug, Voorsitter? Die jeug is gister se kinders en môre se toekoms. So cliché maar tog so waar. Watter persentasie van die jeug is vandag, soos ons eens was, trots op die vlag, trots op ons volkslied, trots op ons land en trots om ’n burger met ’n uitgestote bors in ’n luide stem uit te roep, ons vir jou Suid-Afrika? Wat het die jeug, wat so baie van ons vooruitgegaan het, gedoen? Hoe het hulle sukses behaal? Wat was hul dryfkrag? Wat was hul motivering?

My oë het onlangs geblink toe ek weer die flikkering van ons jongmense in hul harte sien. Die begeerte om meer te wees. Die begeerte om die beste jong man of dame te wees wat hul kan wees, ongeag onderdrukking, ongeag veragting wat hulle onverdiend van ander kry, ongeag minagting en haat. In daardie

hoendervleis-oomblik was my hoop vernuwe. Ons jeug besef dat hulle self, met ons leiding en hulp, moet sorg vir ’n nalatenskap vir hulle kinders.

*English*:

So many of our youth are a beacon of hope. I have faith in you. The FF Plus has faith in you. Yes, I know that there are not a lot of opportunities, but the fact that you have the ability, the intellect, the willpower to try, to apply your mind, to be innovative and to never, never give up, will be the determining factor of your success.

We as a collective currently have one common goal – survival. We need to keep faith in God and keep faith in ourselves. Fear is a monster that dwells both in the dark and in the light, but fear is in your mind. Danger is real but fear is in your mind*.*

We are not oblivious to the current state of affairs and the ANC-created racial tension that exists. Do not allow fear of failure to keep you from trying. Do not let fear of disappointment prevent you from reaching for the stars. Do not let fear of what people say prevent you from achieving your full potential.

*Afrikaans*:

Jeug, ons hoef vir niemand en niks terug te staan nie. Ons stry die stryd met respek vir ander, sonder om ekskuus te sê, sonder om neer te sien en sonder om ander na te kom. Sonder om terug te druk, moet ons ons doel bereik ... voortbeur.

Die regering gee ons nie dalk die geleenthede nie, voorsien nie dalk in al ons behoefdes nie, bied nie ons toekoms vir ons op ’n skinkbord aan nie, maar dit is goed.

Hoekom, sal julle uitroep. Dit is goed want ons is ’n groepering wat bou. Ons is ’n groepering wat nie terugstaan nie, wat voortbeur ten spyte van die beknopte werkloosheid en depressie. Ons is ’n groepering wat die hoop behou, sonder ontkennig van die werklikheid en die waarheid ... met kundigheid aanhou en oorleef. Saluut aan die medestryders. Ons sal nie die huidige, haglike omstandighede as die nuwe normaal aanvaar nie. Ons moet blymoedig bly ten spyte van alles.

*English*:

Job opportunities may be reserved through legislation, opportunities to study may be determined through regulations, our cultural heritage may be destroyed by a salivating few, but our values, our respectful pride, our ability to survive,

our culture and our language rushes through our veins and nothing will stop us or our youth from reaching our full potential and securing a future for our children.

*Afrikaans*:

Jeug van Suid-Afrika, die pad vorentoe is nie met rose besaai nie, maar ons dra vellies en ons is gehard. Ons sal die eindpunt saam bereik. Staan op, staan sterk en staan trots.

Dankie Voorsitter.

Ms A D MALEKA: Hon Chairperson of the council, the Chief Whip, the Deputy Minister and special delegates, the time is right for the Youth Month to be refocussed and be solutions-based on the issues that matters most to young people in the country. [Interjections.]

The pandemic has to encourage our government to reimagine Youth Month contextually so that young people can relate to its significance in its current context whilst appreciating the past.

Now is the time that we should truly focus on economically empowering our youth to develop into the leaders of tomorrow. This is one of the greatest, yet most noble task of our

generation. Our society and how it is structured, socially and economically, is not accidental but an outcome of contradictions which exist in our society.

The knowledge we develop and apply is informed by different theoretical perspectives. Its ontology is not absolute but it is biased to a particular school of thought.

During the period of colonialism and apartheid, our education curriculum was used to project Africans and alternative knowledges to those of colonial powers as untruths and false. Education was also used to justify apartheid as a government policy and social system.

The 2015 and 2016 Rhodes Must Fall Movement and the global call for decolonisation by the youth and student movements, in particular, is a critical call for transformation.

The domination of capitalist and western knowledges in our curriculum and thus orientating the youth to aspire western values and orthodox knowledges which sustain the current status quo. This is a status quo which continues to reproduce unemployment, inequality and poverty.

Hon members, we need to begin to embrace alternative knowledges and solutions to our problems. Orthodox forms of responding to our challenges have not brought about the realisation of a better life for all.

Our higher education institutions, which produce knowledge, should begin to focus on alternative solutions and create spaces for progressive academics who propose alternatives.

Young people should also be exposed to diverse school of thoughts in order to contribute in society.

The orientation of our education is important in responding to our economic and social challenges.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, lays the foundation for youth empowerment. This is a responsibility that the ANC-led government has not taken lightly and has consistently advanced a holistic, integrated and sustainable development approach to this responsibility.

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa, ADEA, correctly asserted that instead of rote learning, young people need skills in unstructured problem-solving and

reasoning. Critical thinking skills are what will drive job creation and economic growth for the future. We must change our educational systems to develop these skills.

The Development Bank of South Africa, DBSA, launched the DBSA Youth Challenge aimed at getting youth between 18 to 35 years of age in South Africa to come out with solutions to some of the country’s infrastructure challenges. The winning submissions received a total of R1,5 million prize money, which can be used to start a business of further their studies.

The winner from the first edition of the DBSA Youth Challenge was Miss Kekeletso Tsiloane, whose solution focused on manufacturing innovative composite bricks made from recycles plastic, sand and proprietary. This process does not use water but only plastic waste, allowing for the direct employment of waste pickers.

Mr Zuko Mandlakazi, won second place. He created a soundwave sensor-embedded product that assists people with hearing loss to be more present and alert to life-saving sounds.

Joint third place belonged to Ms Lebogang Joy Leshabane, who created a biogas purification system that produces high grade methane from sewage treatment plants; and Mr Francois de Beer, with a solar tracking kit that can be retrofitted to any existing solar installation for the energy sector.

These are the capabilities our higher education and skill opportunities should enhance. Innovation to solve our socioeconomic problems.

In order to realise free education, social agency has been a critical force in order to expand higher education. Through the exercise of their right to protest, students have advanced their struggle to realise free education for decades. This is also due to the level of consciousness which is also rising due to the growing inequality and poverty in South Africa.

This material conditions of students struggling to get access to higher education where the cause of students to embark on a nationwide student protest.

Universities of society are an important site of struggle and transforming these spaces will contribute significantly in influencing our society. Like the youth of the student movements of the 1960s, when struggles are championed in

higher education so will our communities gravitate to such change.

Universities and our colleges should be seamlessly integrated with our communities and should make a positive impact in the communities they’re located. The public should identify with them as a tool of transformation and not as distant to the people.

In the eloquent words of his excellency, President Ramaphosa, at the ADEA said: Preparing youth for the future of work reflects an understanding that Africa’s demographic dividend can only be earned through the investment in the continent’s highest-yielding resource: its young people. Thank you, Chairperson. [Applause.]

Cllr S MONDLANE (SALGA): Thank you very much, hon Chair of the National Council of Provinces, hon members of the NCOP, hon Deputy Chair, members of the SA Local Government Association, Salga. Salga is very honoured to participate in this debate today. Chair, I must start by highlighting that the story of the youth of 1976 has been told countless time. However, through all the narratives of June 16, one fact remains, young people driven by ideals of freedom, peace and equality were at

the forefront of challenging the ills of the education system and the apartheid regime. Their sacrifices should inspire us to honour their legacy by reliving and practicing their aspirations they lived for. As we commemorate the youth month the challenges of youth unemployment dominate our discussions. A lot has been done by the democratic government to reform the education system of South Africa. However, Chair, there is also no denying that a lot still needs to be done. Despite the progress that has been made, the youth of the country remains frustrated and struggle with accessing tertiary education and economic opportunities. These challenges have been further compounded by COVID-19 pandemic. The challenge of young people who are not in employment not in education or training and the rising educated youth unemployment are some of the major and agent challenges that call for special and prioritised attention from all spheres of government, including the private sector. As revealed in the Statistics SA survey of 1 June, the official unemployment rate amongst the youth was 46,3% in the first quarter of 2021.

The National Development Plan, NDP, highlights the need to step up measures to include young people in the democratic government processes and in the development of plans to address the concerns of the youth. The active involvement of

the young people in governance processes, including local government is especially critical in order to properly understand and to respond appropriately to the current and future developmental needs of this large segment of the population which is a youth.

Hon Chair, I am certain that all segments of the society echoed the same sentiments that youth development must be at the epicentre of the national development agenda. Local government can therefore play its role by taking active steps to ensure that we contribute to supporting access to education and skills development for the youth to enable conducive economic and social conditions for employment opportunities.

Some of the challenges facing young people include funding and financial constrains including inaccessibility to higher education and training, lack of career guidance, lack of skills and training, unavailability or inaccessibility of financial support for skills development, an ever increasing number of out of school graduates and semiliterate youth, general lack of skills, which makes the youth unemployable.

The following are some of the initiatives implemented by the municipalities to expand the youth development skills.

Offering bursaries in line with the developmental needs of

municipalities, prioritising the youth from the impoverished families, skills training workshops in partnerships and linking to relevant sectoral education and training authorities. Providing capacity building for nonprofit organisations and community-based organisations, assisting in facilitating the flow of information for job seekers, especially the first time job seekers to access information about real job placement. Linking tertiary education youth to be the job agencies and more targeted skills, establishment of business advisers and career guidance services, literacy and reading development programmes, a drive for youth entrepreneurship to redirect young people from being educated to job seekers, but to actually become job creators. Entering into partnership agreements with other role-players such as nongovernmental organisations, community-based organisations and other governmental departments, whose services are youth focused. The participation of the young people in the municipal integrated development planning process is particularly important in order for youth interest to be effectively included in the goals, strategies, projects and budgets of the municipalities. Most municipalities have dedicated mechanisms to enable and encourage youth participation, for example through the establishment of youth forums, youth councils and advisory committees.

Hon members, there is no denying that young people continue to face a number of challenges in the form of poverty, unemployment and acute global economic and social challenges. While we may have the solutions to the number of challenges they face today, we do however believe that with the right skills, support and enabling opportunities our endeavours to bring change in the lives of our young people will bear a fruit.

Chair, I would love to close with a quote of Che Guevara when

he says “Youth *should learn* to *think* and act as a *mass*. It is *criminal* to *think* as *individuals*!” Thank you, Chair.

Ms T G V THLAPI (NORTH WEST MEC ARTS, CULTURE, SPORTS AND

RECREATION): Hon Chairperson, am I audible?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Yes, you are perfectly audible.

Ms T G V THLAPI (NORTH WEST MEC ARTS, CULTURE, SPORTS AND

RECREATION): Thank you very much, hon Chair, the Chief Whip of the NCOP, hon Deputy Ministers, hon MECs, members of SA Local Government Association, Salga, Members of the NCOP, special delegates, ...

*Setswana:*

... baagi ba Aforekaborwa, dumelang. Modulasetilo, ke rata go tsaya nako eno ke lebogele tshono ya go bua mo kgweding ya bašwa. Lekoko le le busang le netefaditse go tlisa diphetogo mo matshelong a bašwa, mme re tshwanetse go dira ka thata go netefatsa gore puso e e busang e fetola matshelo a bašwa ba rona.

*English:*

Hon Chair, young has a huge role in nation-building, and active participation of young people has a power to help a country to develop and move towards the progress. The youth is also responsible for bringing social reform within the country, and they determine the future of the nation. Hon Chair, the debate comes at the time when the country is faced with the coronavirus pandemic, where it has had a major health and social effects on the lives of young people.

The pandemic has worsened the economic state of the country and the young people has been hugely affected on this matter. Hon Chair, it is vital that we attack poverty, unemployment and inequalities at all cost. These triple challenges continue to be a threat to the well-being of our country, especially of the youth. There is enough evidence that shows the negative

impact they on the future of the country. Unlike ever before, practical and tangible measures should be taken towards decisively addressing these challenges.

Hon Chair, the democratic government has been leading this agenda of this development, and I must indicate that, there is noticeable progress made up to this far. In the very same vein, we must accept as government that a lot still needs to be done in order for us to emerge victorious from aforementioned challenges. A slow moving economic growth compounded by the current global economic challenges, makes it difficult for the youth to participate optimally in the economy and in the society in general. Young people bear a burden of poverty and unemployment.

*Setswana*:

Seno ga se puo fela, Modulasetilo.

*English:*

Entrepreneurship, which is seen as a possible avenue to increase economic growth and deal with poverty and unemployment, is not satisfactorily entrenched amongst the youth of this country. Hon Chair, the issue of youth development through education, remains to be at the hands of

government priorities. Our priority area is to make South Africa’s education system more inclusive and equitable with maximum access, especially for poor and marginalised people of our society.

Hon Chair, since the dawn of democracy, progressive strides have been made to make sure that the youth of our country has access to quality education. This includes the developing and evaluating interventions and approaches for improving quality and learning outcomes. The government of the day is alive to the fact that indeed, there are some challenges with regards to access of higher education by the youth, however, one must applaud the ANC-led government for the decisive intervention of introducing the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS. This government’s tertiary funding has indeed assisted many students, hon Chair, and mostly young people, to fully access their education.

The increased funding by government over the years, has yielded a positive result as it guaranteed maximum access, especially for the poor. Hon Chair, quality of education gives rise to a desired skills required in the market. Young people should be equipped with the necessary skills to enable them to be competitive in the market place. The economy of the country

will benefit a lot with active, full participation of the youth. The government, in partnership with all sectors of the society, shall continue to develop youth focused programmes that are committed to unlocking the full potential of the country.

There is a potential in our young people across all sectors, and they must be given a space to challenge the status quo. It is the role of young people to always be inquisitive and adventurous, with appetite to learn and grasp new knowledge that will make them to be the changing agents. As government, we have created a conducive environment for this to take place through the necessary support for young people. Hon Chair, government through the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, created new pathways into employment for our youth, and this intervention has guaranteed that they increase their right skills, and are able to start their own businesses and get into good jobs as well.

Through the national youth service, young people are able to contribute to their communities and this builds characters of positive and active citizenship, where young people become activists for good, and activists for changing the lives of our people. These efforts are commendable, and I must indicate

that, hon Chair. The youth plays a vital role in the constructive processes of building social cohesion, economic prosperity and political stability, in an inclusive and democratic manner.

*Setswana:*

Eno ke puso ya rona ya kgololesego e e netefatsang gore seno se a diragala, motl Modulasetilo.

*English:*

Young people from ancient time, have always been driven by changing the world and changing the way things are done. It is for this reason that brave young people stood up, and challenged the brutal apartheid system against the youth of Afrikaans as medium of instruction.

*Setswana:*

Motl Modulasetilo, seno re ka se lebale, gape ke se re tla dulang re se gopotsa b aba tlang mo morago ga rona.

*English:*

The efforts of 1976 generation must always remind us that the importance of education in transforming the lives of young people, is important. In closing, hon Chair, allow me to quote

the late President Nelson Mandela when he said: “The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need foe economic success.

*Setswana:*

Motl Modulasetilo, are seka ra lebala ko re tswang kwa teng, mme re itshwarele b aba neng ba re sotlile ka tsa thuto mo malobeng. Puso ya kgololesego, e tla tswelela go fetola matshelo a bašwa ka mananeo a a maleba jaaka ke kaile fa godimo. Re san a le tiro e tona jaaka puso e e busang go netefatsa fa bašwa ba rona ba ka tsaya karolo mo kgodisong ya letlole la lefatshe la rona. Ke a leboga.

Mr B LUBISI (Mpumalanga): Thank you, hon Chair. Chair, in an occasion such as this one, it is important to tap into the intellectual faculties of Chinua Achebe who warned that, if you find water rising up your ankle that is the time to do something about it, not when water is around your neck. Hon Chair, you will agree that apartheid South Africa acted with urgency to deal with water before it reached the ankle for the white minority population. However, they allowed the waters to reach the neck of the black majority who have been treated as subcitizens in a country of their own.

As Nelson Mandela and his generation ushered us into the new hope, a new dream and a new vision captured by our Freedom Charter, the ready to govern documents and our 1994 Manifesto. were to act against the waters that were into our neck. Water must be dealt with at an ankle, but our struggle was to deal with water at our neck, resulting in us needing to lower the waters first to move forward. Indeed, Chair, we have moved, lowered the waters ... [Inaudible.] ... to navigate our plane to the total freedom and the emancipation for the majority of our people. The institute of race relations put it better that we have lowered the water to an ankle as we have grown our economy by 85% since 1994, from R1,653 trillion to

R3,6063 trillion.

The real gross domestic product, GDP, per capita is 33%, higher than it was in 1994. Disposable income has increased by 42% and more than double the number of black Africans are employed now than in 1994. We reduced informal homes that now we have 131,3% increase in the normal homes when compared to 1994. The people with electricity for cooking and lighting increased by 228% and 192% respectively, while access to water has more than doubled to 110% when it compared to 1994. We continue to lower the water from the neck below the ankle.

This is evident by the fact that now we have higher

proportions of black South African student passing than ever before. We are now above 70% compared to the 49% in 1994.

Most students are attending at universities than ever before at 900 000 in 2020, when it is compared to the 385 000 in 1990 and 200 000 in 1994. The black South African students now make up the majority of students at over 72% when compared to 20% in 1980. Definitely, we have lowered the waters from the neck to the ankle. At the center of our program, where it is always about the youth and women, young people have always been at the front to confront the brutality of apartheid and they are now placed at the front to advance socioeconomic transformation.

We do everything possible to ensure that this generation recognises and embraces the task peculiarity designed by the history and by province to perform. As I tapped into the wisdom of Chinua Achebe, free education the scraping of experience in entry post in the public sector, rollout of National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, and online application for post in the public sector is a progressive action of government to reduce youth and unemployment is nothing but testament that when we say that the youth is our motive force we do not pay lip service but implement tangible

programs to better the lives of young people. While we continue to struggle with youth unemployment will continue to pin our hopes in the decisive implementation of the SA Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. Who will reach consensus that the waters to be lowered to the ankle as we were battle unemployment.

Before Covid-19 hit us and the globe, our youth unemployment was at staggering 70% and further increased to 74%. This is coupled with the painful reality that 41,7% of our youth are not in employment, education and training which will exacerbate the problem. It is important that we deal with this matter. While the National Assembly has just finalised the shortlisting of candidates of the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, we hope that the board will revitalise the National Youth Development Agency to be a catalyst of change, particularly co-ordinate all social partners to mostly deal with the youth that is not in employment, education and training. We must continue our efforts with the aggressive implementation of our various policies and legislation to curb youth income over the youth marginalisation in the labor market.

We must do this inspired by President O R Tambo, who taught us that a nation’s success depends also on its ability to encourage, harness and incorporate into its endeavors, their creativity, daring the energy of the youth. We must encourage our youth to participate in agriculture. We appreciate our program of Fortune 40, which is implemented by the Mpumalanga government of luring youth into agriculture. We must be serious about the youth in agriculture to curb food security while absorbing most of them. We must continue our efforts to improve the image of agriculture. We ought to accelerate efforts to greater awareness of the benefits of agriculture as a career amongst young people, in particular opportunities for greater market engagement, innovation and farming as a business.

We once again implore the example as set by the Mpumalanga government of establishing a fresh produce market to facilitate the agriculture market which needs to be deracialised and made fashionable to the use. Our efforts to get youth in agriculture must continue to facilitate access to land and credit. We must accelerate our efforts in this front because land is scarce and difficult to access for young people and without collateral getting credit to buy land is impossible. Our pursuit for innovation and financing for

agriculture and small business require improvement. Hon Chair, together we continue to work around the clock to lower the waters that apartheid left on the neck of our people. We will continue to lower them and below the ankle in our efforts to growing youth employment to inclusive and transform society.

We carry our task inspired by President Mbeki who encouraged us that “Gloom and despondent have never defeated adversity. Trying times needs courage and resilience. Our trying as people is not tested during the best times” He continues to say that we should not become despondent because the weather is bad, nor shall we turn triumphalist because the sun shine. Hon Chair ... [Time expired.] ... President Nelson Mandela once said, our children are our greatest treasure. Thank you, Chair.

Mr M R BARA: Masibulele Sihlalo (Thank you Chair). Chair of the NCOP, Deputy Minister and Members of the NCOP, I think that this debate takes place at a very good time. I think that there is a need for us to put ideas as to how we rescue the nation as we are confronted with youth unemployment. This has to be done at the same time whilst there is a challenge that we are confronted with of COVID-19.

Chair, according to Statistics SA, the official unemployment rate amongst youth 15 to 34 years stands at 46,3% in the first quarter of 2021. The rate was 9,3 among university graduates. Some researchers placed the expanded definition of unemployment amongst youth at over 70.

Worryingly, the Statistician-General confirmed that of the 10,3 million young people between 15 and 24, 3,3 million are not in employment, education or training. It is clear that, both the government and the private sector have not done enough to empower our young people. There are few fundamental reasons for this problem namely:

Basic education outcomes are poor in both quality and quantity for an example, only 44% of Grade 10s enrolled in 2018 wrote and passed matric in 2020, which created a system dropout which is not catered for by the postschool system. Secondly, access to higher education for those who pass matric is very limited. There are only 25 university-based institutions, a TVET sector that does not produce modern skills and no real vocational training for those who look for skills-based programmes like plumbing, electrical work, knitting and sewing etc. Thirdly, an economic environment with no significant growth averages 0,8% growth between 2015 and 2019, and

declining manufacturing employment-based and virtually no support programmes for entrepreneurial franchise from the state.

The solution for access to higher education and skills development is a sliding scale of Higher Education Access Funding Model including free education for the poor, some marginally subsidised higher education for the missing middle or household income between R350 000 to R600 000 and the rest must sell far. The massification of university institutions has resulted in a push for TVET colleges to be institutions of choice. The key problem or question that we must ask is; why are TVET colleges not able to absorb students or become an outright choice for many students. Learners look to universities first even when seeking technical or vocational skills.

Part of the problem is that, as a country we have not invested enough in these colleges. The Governments Model for TVET is centralised in Pretoria. College councils are riddled with capacity limitations to execute on their tasks. There is a high turnover of staff and learners in some of these colleges creating institutional instability. This is because qualified learners possess skills that are needed by specific industries

within that sector. For an example, people teaching mechanical engineering can return to the industry for higher salaries. In some instances, the salaries are not good, conditions of employment are not great and the infrastructure is not always kept in good condition.

Chair, these create problems and we therefore have to make TVET colleges viable both in human resources and facilities. TVET colleges are closer to people and communities meaning, they can lessen the cost of education access and delivery for students. However, Chair, the Funding Model for TVET colleges does not seem to be transparent enough and needs to be challenged. We also have to find innovative solutions for these colleges to generate third income streams.

All that is known is that students are on the National Students Financial Aid Scheme, Nsfas but beyond that, there is not much readily information. There is a need to popularise TVET colleges for potential students to see them as an option, the same way students would know about the University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town, University of KwaZulu- Natal, Rhodes University, etc. That is why publicly TVET colleges are looked down upon, their condition is not inviting enough.

Chairperson, the quality of education and skills that is rendered must of high quality. There is a need for greater private sector and TVET colleges collaboration We see that most companies, like car manufacturers and mining companies do their own in-house learnerships to impart vocational skills they need. What this does, is to close up potential employment for students in the colleges. There is a need for knowledge- sharing and the opening up absorption to students. Companies must help TVET colleges to reach world class skills levels.

Tracking and tracing of learners or students who have qualified from these institutions of higher learning, is quite important. With such high numbers of youth unemployment, it is important to undertake a discussion on how we can have an economy that can employs young people removing the structural barriers as noted above.

Chair, in closing I want to say that, it is important to have this conversation but have it inclusive of the people that we are talking about, because many and many of them are unemployed and therefore have to look upon us and the government to find ways and means of them making a living.

Therefore, it would be great to have a convergence of everybody sitting together and saying, how do we deal with the

problem that we are confronted with. With those words Chair, I want to thank you and the House at large. Thank you so much.

Mr A J NYAMBI: Chairperson Masondo, Chairperson Ngwenya, Chief Whip Mohai, fellow members, Deputy Minister Manamela, ladies and gentlemen, listening to hon Khakhau and hon Allen, indeed politics is loved by many but understood by few. The day you learn and understand that the difference between politicking and politics you will probably understand today's topic better. Context is everything. Out of context, it's anything. Unless you understand your role in society you will never make any meaningful contribution.

You don’t have shame even in vulgarising historical facts about the role of the youth, what a shame. I cannot help but take note of the fact that the youth of yesteryear had in every respect little room to manoeuvre. So limited were their opportunities that those who lasted the schooling distance had an easy choice to make between being teachers, nurses, and police officers. Most of those who could not make meaning of the limited opportunities that South Africa offered them opted to join the liberation struggle in a just fight against deprivation and oppression. While some waged the struggle from within the borders of our beloved motherland others decided to

go into exile where they joined liberation armies like Umkhonto Wesizwe. They must have taken to heart the words of Mahatma Gandhi when he said, “you must be the change you want to see in the world”. In so doing, they sacrificed their youthfulness as they appropriated unto themselves the responsibility of being national liberators.

They left behind their unfulfilled dreams of fending for their families and shattered promises of walking their loved ones down the aisle. They also left in their wake untold heartbreak as their parents were left wondering what had happened to their children. This I know for a fact. One of the people who left to take arms in exile was my late brother Prince. His departure left a gaping hole in our hearts especially that of my late mother who had to stay strong for every one of us.

Each passing day was a grim reminder of the fact that ...

*IsiZulu*:

... asiphelelanga.

*English*:

... as a family. Those of us who remained behind were never spared the cruelty of the then apartheid regime, random

sjamboking, teargassing, shootings were our daily portion. We did not deserve all but the apartheid regime in its warped judgment thought otherwise. They cut short the lives of my peers, robbing us of friends and playmates. I counted amongst them the likes of Esme Mashaba, Fanikie Joseph Thobela and Fana Walter Mbungela who were callously maimed just because of their skin. The three of them were shot in one long night in our village of Block C in Komatipoort in 1996. They condemned Nomsa Mabuza to a life of misery in a wheelchair when she could have gone to be a queen of the tracks. She was fast as lightning as an athlete but you could not run fast enough to avoid a volley of bullets from trigger-happy police officers.

These heartless murderers killed Anthony Madonsela whose only sin was his vision for a country that provided for all the citizens. They hunted us down in the playing grounds, in places of worship. They hunted us out of the mealie fields, grazing pastures. In their eyes, we were nothing else but children of snakes who were equally capable of injecting venom. In their view, we needed to be crushed in ways that also extended into our four walls of formal education. We are good enough to be trained as servants who will meet the needs of our master, just drawers of water and hewers of wood. With all odds stacked heavily against us, we relied on our

collective will to win and great resilience. We put up a gallant fight with nothing but clenched fists and the deep love of our country. We lost lives but we also gained our freedom. Along with Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, we wish to thank all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice from earlier generations to the youth of 1976 through to 1986, we remain eternally indebted.

We know now that their blood was not shed in vain. They became the blood that nourished the tree which brought us the fruits of freedom as Kalushi Mahlangu said. Twenty-five years since we celebrated Youth Day, our youth still find themselves grappling with challenges that we should have already overcome. Youth unemployment, of course. Does it seem to be receding, on the contrary, it is rising and the question should be asked, what is it that needs to be done to get most of our young people economically active.

I have carefully chosen the phrase, “economically active” ahead of the word, “working” because that is the ... [Inaudible.] ... that we should be talking about as said by hon Deputy Minister Manamela. There has to be a change in our mindset away from thinking of our young people as potential employees. We should think of them as potential creators of

employment. This they cannot achieve on their own but we need a conducive environment and continued support from all in society. Without attempting to present one of those how-to manuals, let me share with you what I think should be a starting point in building the cornerstone of our society.

Firstly, we need to reclaim our schools as crime-free and secure centres of education, more so because in the words of John Dewey, “education is not preparation for life. Education is life itself”. Schools are where the battle was first lost when in 1976 the youth took the initiative to accelerate the fight against apartheid. Once this was achieved, the youth had less regard for officialdom that was seen to have been sleeping through a revolution. The moral high ground was wrestled from officialdom who not only slept through a revolution but also participated in enforcing apartheid laws.

With corporal punishment being the only response from officialdom schools became breeding grounds for violence. Teachers spanked their learners to enforce their authority and the learners retaliated through rebellious conduct. Further, some perverts find it convenient to prey on our school children and this needs to stop. The National Register of Sex Offenders needs to be popularised to deter would-be offenders.

Learners have also perpetrated atrocious acts against each other. These acts took the form of physical fights and other forms of abuse that have accounted for the death of Lufuno Mavhunga in recent times. May her beautiful soul rest in eternal peace. We understand that schools being a microcosm of society and unfortunately not insulated from community violence, gang and drug wars have often played themselves out in some of our schools, taking away much-needed teaching time. However, the time has come that we all need to say, enough is enough.

*Afrikaans:*

Ons het nou te veel gehad, ...

*English*:

... hon Du Toit. Educators, learners and every other person involved in our schooling system do not only have to be safe but needs to feel safe as well within the school. The Adopt-A- Cop initiative needs to be ramped up with safety communities performing their responsibilities as their lives depend on it.

There's another key point I need to make on the role that higher education plays in developing our communities but, firstly, let me state that, higher education is not only about

university education, I disagree with you, hon Bara. It is also about TVET colleges and I agree with Deputy Minister Manamela.

The area of knowledge creation through research in institutions of higher learning is also an important one as requisite skills are identified and matched to the demands of the market. Unlike previously, higher education now offers a wide range of vocational subjects which creates skills for equally varied markets. The days where we were trained to take up jobs as teachers, nurses and police officers have long passed and the youth need to embrace new possibilities. A word of caution though, the young people need to safeguard their freedom by the actions that they take. The reports of the misuse of funding meant for ... [Interjections.]

*IsiZulu*:

USIHLALO WOMKHANDLU KAZWELONKE WEZIFUNDAZWE: Hhawu-ke baba,

saphela isikhathi.

*English*:

Mr A J NYAMBI: In conclusion, allow me to indicate that even

when a lion is hungry it won’t eat grass. So don’t change your

principles just because your stomach is empty. Thank you, Chairperson. [Interjections.] [Applause.]

*IsiZulu*:

Mnu X NGWEZI: Nyambose!

*English*:

Chairperson! Chairperson!

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Ngwezi?

*IsiZulu*:

Mnu X NGWEZI: Hhayi baba ... [Ubuwelewele.]

USIHLALO WOMKHANDLU KAZWELONKE WEZIFUNDAZWE: Inkinga yakho

yileyo. Usuke unyamalale wena.

*English*:

And if you disappear it becomes difficult but we will give you an opportunity. [Interjections.]

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP: Chair, I think I need to make a remark in this regard.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Yes.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP: In the absence of any explanation to the Chief Whip of the Council and we proceed with the debate, we regard such a member as not being present in the House. Being on virtual doesn’t qualify us to come back on the list. The list is structured in accordance with the parties and how they should participate in the debate. So there was no explanation from hon Ngwezi and, as a result, it makes it difficult for us to accept this kind of conduct, that he must come back and feature in a debate that needs to be closed.

Mr X NGWEZI: Hon Chair, may I please address you?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Ngwezi ...

*IsiZulu*:

... ngiyethemba uzwile ukuthi lento yokunyamalala baba, hhayikhona. Isifaka enkingeni.

*English*:

Mr X NGWEZI: May I please address you Chair?

*IsiZulu*:

USIHLALO WOMKHANDLU KAZWELONKE WEZIFUNDAZWE: Kodwa-ke ngenxa

yokuthi-ke lolu daba esikhuluma ngalo lubalulekile kangaka, ngizokuyeka nje ngikunikeze imizuzu embalwa.

*English*:

So please proceed but, yeah, something needs to change in the way you do things. But Ngwezi ...

*IsiZulu*:

... qhubeka-ke

*English*:

Mr X NGWEZI: Hon Chair, with due respect, it is this issue of load shedding really and I was indicating that there is no electricity here in Ulundi where I am so I have been struggling, you know, I am sorry, Chairperson and the Chief Whip, Mr Mohai.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP: Thanks.

*IsiZulu*:

USIHLALO WOMKHANDLU KAZWELONKE WEZIFUNDAZWE: Yebo. Qhubeka-ke

baba.

*English*:

Please proceed. Ngwezi?

*IsiZulu*:

Hhawu! Usenyamalele futhi uNgwezi-ke manje?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Hon Chairperson, hon members who have contributed to this fruitful debate, of cause, there were interventions from some of the members. The first point that I would really want to respond to relates to the fact that there has been violence in some of our institutions when there have been protests. We really regret, and we have continually said so, the loss of life during protests in our institutions. Our Ministry and department have been working quite closely with the Minister of Police and also with SAPS to ensure that there is no life that is lost in terms protests.

Secondly, we work harder so that there are no protests. With some of the interventions that we, as government has made, the intention is to avert protests as much as possible, so that students are in lecture halls, they are learning and that they are receiving their education, as opposed to being in the streets and protesting.

Linked to this is the fact that, in as much as our Constitution and country respect the rights of everyone to protest, I think it is important that we indicate that we have to encourage protest that is responsible. We have seen, since 2016, the loss of property to the value of close to R850 million in our universities. This is money and an investment that should have gone to the future of the education of our country and which has really gone to waste.

I sympathise with some of the points that hon members have raised, as it relates to some of the students who have been arrested, as a result of the destruction of property. I think that, as a society, we need to take a stance against the destruction of property during protest, just as government should be held accountable where there are challenges that relate to access to education.

Secondly, one of the hon members from the Western Cape from the DA was probably in a wrong debate and was ranting on and on about Eskom, the buying of mops and double-ply toilet paper. I think the hon member was crying at a wrong funeral. We are here trying to engage with the serious issues and challenges that affect our education system and the hon member

should have brought the right speech to this particular debate.

Be that as it may, we think that to try and suggest that the provision of fee-free higher education in South Africa is merely a socialist dream and that it is nonsensical. And I think that that should not be accepted. I hope that the DA would go to the majority of students – more than 700 000 and more than a whole lot of households in our country – who are dependent on the provision of fee-free higher education and say to them that we need to scrap this. We believe that this intervention was important, it was urgent and we are working on it to ensure that it becomes sustainable, precisely because it puts millions of students on a different pedestal, as it relates to access to education. We remain unhindered in our effort to ensure that education is provided in general for the majority of our students in the country.

There has also been a whole range of points raised around the whole question of long-term employment versus the question of internships. In many instances, employers insist that graduates should have some experiential training. Internship programmes which are provided through our Sitas proved that opportunity for students to gain this experience. We have seen

a lot of young people graduating and then get experiential training and then get full-time employment. I think it is something that we will continue to strengthen. Yes, there are some weaknesses, but we believe that it is a system that has been working.

Broadly around unemployment, in general and youth unemployment, in particular, these are structural issues that our government has committed itself to address. They are not merely issues of policy. To live under the illusion that we can implement some policy devises and with a magic wand, create employment is wrong. That will not happen. That is why our commitment, particularly with the economic recovery plan that was announced by the President, late last year, the intention is to deal with the structural inequalities that exist in our society, issues around broad economic ownership and the commitments that should be made in order to deal with these structural inequalities.

As long as we pay lip service to this issue and reduce it to a mere policy issue, we will not be able to make the necessary impact that needs to be made.

I accept that some of the points that have been made, as it relates to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and need for us to have both policy focus and implementation. We should also look at the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution as motivation for us in the modernisation of the public education system and ensure that we position as leaders in this critical fields of human endeavour. So, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is also, in our view, an opportunity to build a culture of grassroots innovation that could be linked to our institutions of higher learning.

The hon member from the FF Plus spoke quite extensively about a whole range of issues, particularly addressing young people not to be daunted by fear and I must tell him that young people in this country do not have fear. It is those young people who fought tirelessly, some of them who lost their lives to bring about the freedom which we enjoy today. For the hon member to also go on and on about some of the points that he has been raising, which I believe are quite unimaginative, do not even contribute to this discussion and are merely intended to protect the few who have continuously benefitted post-apartheid should actually be dismissed with the contempt it deserves.

In the overall, we take some of the valid points that have been raised and we remain consistent and focussed. We believe that through education, quality post-school education and training, we will be able to live up to the legacy of the youth of 16 June 1976, the ideals which they fought for and dreams that they had at the time. And in that way, we believe that we can build a better country for all of us. Thank you.

Debate concluded.

The Council adjourned at 14:48.