**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FRIDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2021**

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY***

The House met at 10:00.

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

The SPEAKER: Hon members, in the interest of safety for all present in the chamber, please keep your masks on and sit in your designated area. I thank you.

The only item on today’s Order Paper is the Questions

addressed to the President.

There are four supplementary questions on each question. Parties have given an indication of which questions their members wish to pose a supplementary question.

Adequate notice was given to parties for this purpose. This was done to facilitate participation of members who are connecting to the sitting through the virtual platform.

Members who will pose supplementary questions will be recognised by the presiding officer.

In allocating opportunities for supplementary questions, the principle of fairness, amongst others, has been applied.

If the member who is supposed to ask a supplementary question through the virtual platform is unable to do so due to technological difficulties, the party Whip on duty will be allowed to ask the question on behalf of the member.

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

The first question has been asked by the hon T I Legwase.

I’m informed that the President will be answering questions

through the virtual platform.

In terms of Rule 142(9) there’s no time limit for replies by

the President.

I now invite the President.

Mr president, you may now respond to the question.

Question 7:

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, hon members, the task of nation building rests on the shoulders of all of us as South Africans. This is a commitment that we as South Africans made to each other when we adopted our democratic Constitution

25 years ago following a broad consultation process that saw many South Africans participating in.

The acts of violence and destruction that took place in parts of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng in July of this year, revealed many of the challenges that we still confront in building a united and cohesive society.

Part of the work we must do is to critically examine the preparedness for, and the response of, our security and law enforcement services to these types of unrests, particularly to this one.

I have appointed an expert panel to investigate these issues, which will guide the measures that we need to take to prevent the recurrence of such events.

Another critical part of the work that we must do is to address the social and economic factors that also contributed to the violence and destruction that we saw.

A deeply disturbing aspect of the unrest was the emergence of racial tension in parts of eThekwini, particularly between African and Indian communities. This was occasioned by the terrible scenes of violence and several killings in and around the area of Phoenix.

Our law enforcement agencies have made significant progress in arresting individuals alleged to have been involved in this violence and the law must, of necessity, take its course.

However, there is a broader task of addressing both underlying racial tensions that may have contributed to these events, and the further tensions that these events may have given rise to.

I wish to acknowledge and welcome the efforts of the SA Human Rights Commission, SAHRC, which is investigating the causes and circumstances of the violence in Phoenix.

Government supports the ongoing work by the religious fraternity and civil society in promoting racial integration and co-existence in some of the most affected areas.

The Social Cohesion Advocates, which is a group of eminent persons and experts from all sectors of society, has been particularly active in this regard.

The Social Cohesion Advocates were established following the 2012 National Social Cohesion and Nation Building Summit to assist government in fighting all forms of discrimination and promoting nation building.

Working with the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, and in partnership with the relevant provincial departments as well as local government, including civil society and affected communities, they have conducted numerous social cohesion engagements to ascertain the root causes for the discord that occurred and manifested itself in the violence and killings that ensued and also to suggest possible remedies.

These engagements covered areas in KwaZulu-Natal such as Marianhill, Umlazi, Umzinto, KwaMashu, Phoenix, Umkhumbane, Mobeni, Umzinyathi, KwaThoyana, Isipingo, Montclair and Pietermaritzburg.

The District Development Model’s Political Champions, that I appointed last year for the area, Deputy Ministers Nocawe Mafu and John Jeffery, have also paid visits and have been doing quite a lot of work in the affected areas and they have also been overseeing a number of public engagements in these areas and are working closely with the provincial leadership of government as well as political parties, with civil society. A number of social cohesion initiatives are also being undertaken.

Madam Speaker, in these areas of eThekwini, as in all parts of the country, building social cohesion requires a concerted effort to overcome inequality and social deprivation. It requires that we overcome the unequal material conditions that divide society along race, gender and class lines.

These are fault lines that we must continuously work on to close these fault lines.

We must build integrated communities with social infrastructure and services for all. We need to ensure that young people have equal access to quality education, sporting and recreational facilities, social support and employment opportunities.

That is why, as part of its response, the eThekwini Metro government is focused on various programmes aimed at young people, including psycho-social support in schools, the food security programme, youth employment initiatives and the unity games that would focus on the communities of Phoenix, KwaMashu, Inanda, Tongaat and Newlands.

The achievement of social cohesion and nation-building is closely tied to the work we are undertaking to drive economic growth, create employment and transform our economy.

This is also the focus of many of the interventions, as well as initiatives and projects of the eThekwini District Development Model, such as the Metro’s High Impact Catalytic Projects, which will enhance investor confidence and create jobs.

We need to further accelerate the measures that we are undertaking as part of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan and significantly scale up interventions to create jobs and grow our economy. I thank you, madam Speaker.

Ms T I LEGWASE: Hon President, yes, the achievement of social cohesion and nation-building is closely tied to the work we are doing, to drive economic growth to create employment and to transform the economy.

Now, do we have a plan to speed up the economic rehabilitation and reconstruction, which was extremely affected by the events of both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng? Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Yes, hon Legwase, a number of initiatives and interventions are underway to deal with the destruction and damage that ensued following the acts of unrests. For starters, many of the companies that were affected, both retail as well as manufacturing, are now submitting their claims through SA Special Risk Insurance Association, SASRIA, and those have largely been validated and they are dealing with those; and those who were insured will be able to receive payment so that they can reconstruct their

businesses. And even those that were not insured, as government we have committed to assist as much as possible.

This is aimed at ensuring that we do reposition those businesses so that they can rise again from the ashes and provide the goods and services that they were providing to our communities.

What was also most, most impressive is that communities round KwaZulu-Natal and, indeed, Gauteng as well, were able to rise to the occasion to defend the businesses that had not been completely destroyed against those who were perpetrating these acts, but they were also able to rise to the occasion to clean up. I had occasion to visit both areas and I found out that community members were involved in cleaning up and restoring quite a number of businesses that had been devastated with destruction.

So, much is happening and it is good that it is happening in an integrated way with government involved, business owners involved as well as communities and, of course, our law enforcement agencies as well. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Mr President, in the July unrest your police Minister and the SA Police Service sat on their hands as hundreds of people lost their lives and thousands of people lost their livelihoods.

Your government and your Police Minister allowed for a total disintegration of law and order; and you, yourself, have only visited KwaZulu-Natal once for two hours since the unrest.

Now, you want to talk about social cohesion but it is your Police Minister who is out there fanning the flams of racial tension and directing the blame at Indian South Africans only. Nineteen black South Africans lost their lives in Inanda, but Minister Cele doesn’t care about them because they don’t allow him to scapegoat and stereotype the Indian community of Phoenix. And you have done nothing and you’ve said nothing to call him out on it.

So, Mr President, will you, today, condemn your Police Minister who has spent every single day since the unrest scapegoating and stereotyping the Indian minority in Phoenix when in fact the real blame lies squarely on his own shoulders? [Applause.]

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Madam Speaker, I took time to visit KwaZulu-Natal and during the course of my visit there were quite a number of areas that required me to go to but I could not, with the limited time available, visit all of them. And I visited certain of the areas where I met with the members of community – as I’ve said earlier – where I also met with the members of the security forces who explained to me with some great detail what had ensued.

During that visit I was accompanied by the Minister of Police and the then Minister of Defence and the then Minister of Intelligence; they accompanied me throughout the trip.

The Minister of Police, Mr Cele, was meant to go to Phoenix but he interrupted his visit to that area to meet me and explain a great deal of detail about what had ensued.

I know for a fact that Minister Cele has visited the phoenix area and the surrounding areas on a number of occasions; and I know for a fact that he has been engaging with community leaders, African community leaders as well as Indian community leaders. And he has been engaging with all of them with a view of ensuring that the tensions that had erupted between the two communities are quietened down. And he has really done

admirable work and this work has also been taken forward – as I was saying – by Deputy Minister Mafu as well as Deputy Minister Jeffreys.

They have been working in consent and I’m not aware of any acts that Minister Cele have been involved in, in increasing or fanning rather, the flames of tension or racial discord in the area.

On the contrary, he’s the one person who has been seeking to

unite the two communities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms E R WILSON: What language are you on?

Mr A H M PAPO: Point of order, Speaker. Member, Evelyn Wilson, just opened the mic without you allowing her to speak and made a derogatory remark on the platform. This violation of hybrid rules, we agreed it should be stopped because it disrupts the House.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Papo and I’ve noted.

The third supplementary question ... [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, I rise on Rule

140. And can I get assurance from you that the President is alone in that room, because it certainly looks to me like he’s been coached by somebody in that room, which I think it could be a violation of the Rules of Parliament. I think it’s only fair if he’s not going to come to Parliament that he faces the same interrogation that he would face if he was here in person. And if there are other people in that room that are assisting him with the answers, I would submit it’s the violation of rules.

The SPEAKER: Hon Leader of ... [Inaudible.] ... Chief Whip, please take your seat.

From what I have seen, the President is alone on the screen. If there’s anyone ... [Interjections.] ... yes, on the screen he appears to be on his own. I thank you.

Hon Chief Whip of the Majority Party!

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE MAJORITY: Hon Speaker, we cannot allow insinuation and undermining of the intellect of the President. This has started somewhere and we decided not to respond to hon Mazzone. But now this matter is brought here, they must

bring evidence because they are now undermining the President. The president is alone. We know the rules and we cannot allow the leader of DA to come and make mockery out of the President. Thank you.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do things in the correct manner and I raise these issues on forums where they should be raised, like in the Chief Whips Forum; and I’m perfectly in my right during the Chief Whips Forum, which is a closed meeting of Chief Whips, to raise my concerns. So, it is an insult to my integrity and to my intelligence to have the Chief Whip of the ANC, who does not understand the Rules of Parliament, to stand up and say that yet again the DA is passing aspersions.

The fact of the matter is when I raised this issue in the Chief Whips Forum, I mentioned that you could see the shadows of people walking in front of the President.

Now, there are certain issues that cannot be ignored. The one big issue is that the council to the President, Mr Koornhof, is not in the House. Now, we would like to know why that is the case? Because it’s just coincidental that the council to the Deputy President is always in the House, especially when

the Deputy President is in the House. It is a valid question. It is a rule in our Rules Book and it is absolutely within the right of privilege for the leader of ... [Interjections.] ... [Inaudible.] ... to ask for the assurance that the President is by himself and not being coached.

The SPEAKER: Hon Mazzone, thank ... I’m not going to allow

you, hon Papo.

This is an opportunity ... [Interjections.] ... please, hon members. This is the opportunity for South Africans today to listen to what the hon President has to say to South Africans. And I want to make a plea to all of you that let us be adults, let us conduct ourselves with dignity and allow for ... I’m not going to allow you, hon Radebe.

Allow me now to proceed and invite hon Groenewald.

This is not an opportunity for a debate amongst ourselves, it’s an opportunity for the President to address the nation on these matters in the Question Papers. I thank you, hon members.

I now invite hon Groenewald through the virtual platform. That is the third supplementary question.

Dr P J GROENEWALD: Hon President, the question refers to the underlying racial tension that occurred in KwaZulu-Natal. I want to say the following: If you have a newspaper that advertise that the eThekwini Municipality will have an auction of vehicles but Indians are not allowed, that is an underlying racial tension.

If we say we have a Truth and Reconciliation Commission but we start prosecuting people who were involved, then we are not talking about reconciliation, we talk about revenge.

Hon President, are you willing to take the initiative that we start a Convention for a Democratic SA, CODESA 2, so that we can give meaning to the preamble of our Constitution when we say ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it’ and that ‘We are united in our diversity’. And you may use your assistants if you need them to answer the question. Thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Groenewald, thank you for offering that I should use assistants. I can tell you with

great certainty, I don’t need any assistance to answer your question nor any question indeed.

And the suggestion that I am coached is actually quite demeaning and it just shows and demonstrates the extent to which the Leader of the Opposition has lost it in trying to gain brownie points publicly, he casts aspersions. I don’t need coaching. I know my work and I do my work diligently on behalf of the people of our country. And of course, like any other leader, we all have a number of people who stand in assistance on all of us, including himself, he has people who assist him in one shape, form or another.

But in answering your questions, hon Groenewald, I don’t need any coaching. If I do need coaching, I’ll probably come and get you, maybe I can coach you, maybe you can offer advice on one or two other issues.

Coming back to your question, I’m not aware of the advert you

referred to by the metro government in eThekwini.

The issues about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that is a process that was public and the processes that are

ensuing would be found in the report that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission submitted to all of us.

Coming to the issue of whether I would be agreeable to a CODESA 2. I would say I don’t think we need a CODESA 2. All of us as South Africans have a responsibility on a continuous basis to ensure that we do close the fault lines that exist in our society. Fault lines such as race, gender, areas of origin, whether it’s regional or whatever, as well as class.

Those are issues that we need to address on an ongoing basis and whittle down those differences that give rise to tension. And make sure that, yes, we live out to the principles that are enunciated in our Constitution’s principles.

Our Constitution is a contract that we all entered into as South Africans. And that preamble possible is the most beautiful preamble that you can ever find in any Constitution. It speaks to the values, to the principles that should bind us together as South Africans. Now, I would say, rather than establishing another process of a CODESA 2, we just need to embrace those values as South Africans and live them and make sure that we lessen the racial tensions in our country in what we say, in what we do.

We also address the class differences that exist in our society in everything that we do.

We also address the gender challenges that we face as a country, where patriarchy is still the order of the day in our society.

And if we can live all those values as South Africans, then we lessen racial tensions, then we give a respect that is due to the women of our country and we address the inequality and poverty that continues to prevail in our society. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Your Excellency, when you last responded to me in this House you said you will cheer for me.

I now ask for your support for my Private Member’s Bill to register Muslim marriages; which you said during Ramadan you are ready to sign. Since that response, your lady frontbenches also cheer for me. Signing the Bill into an Act will help a whole lot of protests by Muslim wives.

On a more serious note, Your Excellency, Al’Jama-Ah’s response to the unrest is that you take a bold step for full employment in South Africa.

Will you also take another bold step and ask the Minister of Justice to send the report on the application for parole for former President Zuma. Will you take into account that this will halt off future unrests?

And with regard to the criminal charges against Mr Zuma, are you prepared to support an African way, warning of potential further unrests and conspiring against you?

As many [Time expired.] Thank you very much.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, the issue of Muslim marriages is a matter that is under consideration and is being dealt with as we speak. And I would like the hon member to be patient because that matter is being dealt with.

The issue that has to deal with processes around former President Zuma; all those issues are being dealt with in accordance with the precepts of our laws and legal processes and I think they are in good hands in that regard. And those

processes should proceed as they are due to do so in terms of all the legal laws that we have and the regulations.

I now lost sight of the other issue that the hon Hendricks raised. If you could remind me, hon Speaker. It was on my lips.

The SPEAKER: Hon Hendricks!

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon Speaker, I spoke and I was going to go into what the President is going to do to strengthen ubuntu.

But we asked for an African way to deal with the matters that are in the courts to halt off potential unrests and conspiring against our President.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, it did come back to mind that hon Hendricks did mention the issue of full employment, which I’d wanted to also respond to.

But in relation to the issue of ubuntu, relating to the various issues that hon former President Zuma is facing, I did respond to that. that various legal processes are underway and they need to be given the space to unfold because we have good

laws that can enable matters such as these to be handled in the way that they should be handled.

In relation to the earlier question that had slipped my mind, about full employment, I recognize the issue that ... and I appreciate the issue that hon Hendricks is raising. Indeed, unemployment is possible the biggest challenge that our country is facing right now. With the high levels of unemployment, whether the restricted calculation or the expanded calculation, it basically means that we have millions of South Africans who are able-bodied, who should be working, but are not working at present.

This is a question that is at the top of mind for me as President and I’m giving a very, very close attention to this matter. And we will be putting forward a number of proposals in the short coming period about what we should do. And what we should do collectively as the nation, so that we get to grips with how we are going to address the issue of unemployment. I should add that this matter also enjoyed centre-stage when I was involved in the International Labour Organisation’s Commission with the Prime Minister of Sweden, when we led the process of looking at the future of work and how best we can ... as the world and as countries ensure that

the people in our own countries do get to work and I believe that that process and that commission’s work stands us in good stead to be able to address the challenges of unemployment in our country.

So, just to assure you, hon Hendricks, this issue is top, top, top of mind, as far as I’m concerned as President. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Question 8:

The PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker and hon members, the administration that I lead as President came into office on the basis of a clear and decisive electoral mandate.

It was a mandate to transform the economy, advance social transformation, build safer communities, fight corruption, strengthen governance and public institutions, and build national unity and embrace our diversity as the people of South Africa.

I appoint Ministers from among the members of the National Assembly – and the Constitution allows me to choose two other people who are not part of the National Assembly – who collectively and individually have the understanding, the

ability and the commitment to implement the electoral mandate for which the party I lead was elected for.

In areas requiring particular expertise, I appoint Ministers on the basis of their knowledge and skills. I also look at the experience a person has and have had that will enable them to drive the policy direction of government. I consider their capacity to adapt and understand the portfolio they will lead, but I also look at their ability to work with various social partners to achieve the electoral mandate.

To provide greater accountability and transparency, I have signed performance agreements with all Ministers as well as Deputy Ministers, which outlines in detail their responsibilities and tasks. These performance agreements assist in assessing progress in the implementation of government’s programmes and inform any changes that need to be made to the executive.

Even under the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which has caused massive economic and social disruption, this collective has made important progress in the implementation of its electoral mandate.

This Cabinet is determined to continue to work alongside all South Africans to overcome the effect of the coronavirus pandemic, to rebuild our economy, to restore society and to fulfil the mandate it was given. I thank you, hon Speaker.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Mr President, you say that I have lost it, but given the fact that you can’t pay your staff salaries, and you can’t submit candidates for an election, I would venture to say that you, sir, are the one that has lost it.

Mr President, we could speak all day about anyone of the compromised candidates that you shuffled around recently, but I want to ask you particularly about a member of your Cabinet, Mr D D Mabuza, your Deputy President and the Leader of Government Business in this House who certainly doesn’t meet any of the criteria which you have set out for us so eloquently in the House today. In fact, you have put him in charge of leading the coronavirus response and yet he has been completely absent without official leave, AWOL, during the whole term of the pandemic. We also know that he has been completely missing in action during the crisis. He has also been recently out of the country for six full weeks, apparently for a routine medical check-up in Russia. What a

vote of confidence in the South African health care system and your plans for National Health Insurance, NHI, in South Africa.

Mr President, I don’t know how you keep justifying keeping him in your Cabinet, but the question I want to ask you today is: Can you give this House and South Africans a categorical assurance that not one cent of public money was spent on his travel, his accommodation, his security and any other expense relating to that trip to Russia? Thank you.

The PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, thank you. I take it that the hon Steenhuisen is entitled to get into tirades and make statements about various members of the National Assembly. But in relation to the Deputy President, Mr Steenhuisen, some measure of kindness is required when somebody is not well.

The Deputy President was not well for quite some time. This I know because I got involved in granting him leave so that his health can be restored. He had to take time off because he was not well. When somebody is not well, to be subjected to the types of attacks that hon Steenhuisen is subjecting the Deputy President to, I find that not only unkind but quite terrible, really because we are talking about somebody who was not well.

Where he gets his treatment in the end, hon Steenhuisen, is a personal choice just as anyone would choose which doctor should treat them or which dentist should treat them. They are entitled because it affects them personally and they need to feel that they can get whatever best treatment from whatever medical practitioner.

As regards whether government did pay a cent or whatever, as deputy president, the Deputy President is entitled to security wherever he is, including the President. This we do not choose. We do not choose to be continuously shadowed by security people but it is a requirement because it is taken that when we are in positions that we are in, we have almost become state property. Some of us would subject ourselves involuntarily, but it is what comes with the job. So, wherever the Deputy President and the President goes they have to have security. They have security whether they are awake or asleep.

The other issue is that whenever the President or the Deputy President goes, at any given time, their transportation is the responsibility underline of the government. When they fly it is the responsibility of the air force and as they travel on the ground it is the responsibility of the police Presidential Protection Unit. This is what comes with the job. I would

often prefer that I should drive myself, but I can’t. I am told that I cannot easily sit behind a steering wheel and drive myself. Sometimes I sneak it but I am always reprimanded.

So, it is that type of responsibility that is given by being in the positions that we are in. So, I would appeal once again to Mr Steenhuisen that because the Deputy President occupies the position that he does on behalf of our nation, some measure of kindness when he is not well is called for. Thank you, hon Speaker. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Makosini, would you mute, please? Thank you.

Mr X NQOLA: Madam Speaker, to the hon President, yes indeed section 91(2) of the Constitution empowers you to appoint the Deputy President and the Cabinet, but it further obligates you to assign them powers and functions. Now, in assigning those powers and functions, do you perhaps take into consideration the interest, the needs and the aspirations of our people and the country?

Madam Speaker, furthermore, please help us remind Mr Steenhuisen that we are not on idols here. If you have nothing

to ask here, you must just sit down and not grandstand. We are not speaking about the shadow cabinet; we talking real stuff here. Thank you very much.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Sorry, Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I didn’t know that we had sworn in George Benson into the Parliament.

The PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, I did not immediately decipher a question, but in terms of just commenting on what the hon member said, I would confirm that yes the Constitution gives powers to the President to appoint people to the Cabinet, including the Deputy President. It also gives powers to the President to assign them tasks in various departments of government and also in special tasks and responsibilities to execute on behalf of the people of South Africa. Which is precisely what I have done in a number of areas to the Deputy President and indeed to other Ministers as well.

The SPEAKER: The third supplementary question will be asked by the hon O M C Maotwe through the virtual platform.

Mr K CEZA: Speaker, I will be taking the question on behalf of hon Maotwe. Mr President, you rightfully removed Zweli Mkhize

from your Cabinet after allegations were made that he corruptly gave a contract worth millions to his buddies. If you are indeed serious about corruption and your approach to eliminating corruption is not factional, why have you kept Minister Mantashe in your Cabinet, despite revelations that he illicitly benefitted from Bosasa? And why is Zizi Kodwa still a Deputy Minister, despite revelations at the Zondo Commission that he is also a beneficiary of corruption?

Mr B A RADEBE: On a point of order.

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

Mr B A RADEBE: Hon Speaker, I am rising on Rule 85. The member knows very well that when he has to deal with the character or integrity of any members of the House, he must bring it through a substantive motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: I thank you, hon Radebe. Hon Maotwe, you were left with 22 seconds. Okay, hon Maotwe is gone.

Mr K CEZA: We have asked the question, Speaker. We are waiting for the response of the President. Thank you very much.

The PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, faction is an issues that has been raised around Minister Gwede Mantashe in relation to issues of Bosasa which have been dealt with at the State Capture Commission and have been fully explained and fully articulated by non-other that the Minister himself. He explained the circumstances around the issues that the hon member has raised.

In relation to Deputy Minister Zizi Kodwa, the same thing happened. He did get an occasion to go to the commission and answered various questions that had to do with matters like that. So, the various answers that they have given are such that, in my view, were straight forward and fully answered the issues that may well have arisen even publicly.

In relation the issue he raised about hon Dr Zweli Mkhize. Dr Mkhize resigned from Cabinet and I accepted his resignation and we have moved on. I think the matter is best left where it is. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon Speaker, I wouldn’t have intended to enter it in this fashion. I think the order by hon Radebe stands. I would have requested hon Speaker to rule on that because that question says go back to the Rules. If you

want to raise a question that cast aspersions on one’s character you must follow the process of a substantive motion. It is our humble request that the Speaker rules on that.

The SPEAKER: Okay, thank you very much, hon Mondli. Hon Radebe

... [Interjections.] Just a minute. Hon Radebe, rightly so presented that if a member wants to raise the kind of issue that has been raised by the hon Maotwe, the member should submit a substantive motion. And therefore the member is being cautioned that if you wish to pursue that issue, then you submit a substantive motion. I thank you.

Mr M HLENGWA: Madam Speaker, to Mr President, in response to the first question you cited kwaThoyana and I am from there. We have never seen the people or the ministerial or deputy ministerial delegation that you are referring to coming to our area. That would be great if they could actually see through to what you are saying.

Mr President, on the question at hand, yes it is your prerogative, but prerogative in the absence of accountability and transparency lacks integrity. You were elected on the basis of the so called new dawn — righting the wrongs of the past as it were and the so called nine wasted years.

What we saw in those years were Cabinet reshuffles and Cabinet recycles in the absence of transparency, explanations and an inability to take the country into confidence. So, Mr President, in order to legitimise your decisions and to take the country into confidence, why haven’t you explained succinctly every Cabinet change that you have made versus the contract that you have signed? There are Ministers who have been recycled or reshuffled five times and nine times. Mr President, give credence to the new dawn and be transparent.

The SPEAKER: Hon Hlengwa, and I want to make a plea to all members, if your time is up I may allow you a second or two. But once I say it is up and I repeat myself I expect you to abide and to respect the House.

*IsiZulu*:

Mnu M HLENGWA: Ngiyaxolisa ma. Kusho ukuthi angikuzwanga. Ngiyaxolisa kakhulu, Somlomo. Ngehlela ngezansi mhlonishwa.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. Hon Mr President?

The PRESIDENT: Hon Hlengwa, the Constitution, as I said earlier, empowers and also authorises the President to appoint persons who are members of the National Assembly and two non-

members to the Cabinet of the country. In doing so, the President does not need to give any explanation to the affected person — why they have been appointed, and if they are to be removed, why they are removed.

Indeed, the construct of our democracy is such that it empowers the President to take that decision. It is a prerogative that the President has. This happens all over the world. The President is given that authority and that prerogative. The President alone exercises that authority. In doing so, as we drafted our Constitution, the nation invested confidence and trust in the President to be able to take right decisions. Sometimes they may not simply be right by people and a whole debate will ensue around that.

What I have sought to do is, having appointed individuals to the Cabinet, I have sat down with them and entered into agreements. The Deputy President and I evaluate the people once they are appointed. The President alone having taken the decision, we then sit down together with the incumbents and have discussions around the tasks that we want them to execute and enter into agreements, which agreements have now been published. And when any of the individuals is removed they are also not given any reasons by the President because the

President, having the authority and the prerogative to appoint and to remove or dismiss members of the Cabinet, does so for reasons that he or she has. That is where it starts and ends.

As regards the transparency and accountability that hon Hlengwa seeks, that should ensue as the work gets done and where the work is not done properly there will be accountability. There will also be transparency with regard to what they signed for and the tasks that they have been given to execute.

In the end, it is up to all of us, as the public and citizens of this country, to evaluate whether members of the executive are doing their work as it is set out in their agreements. In the end, it is my evaluation together with the Deputy President, that determines what needs to be done. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Question 9:

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker and hon members, since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in our country in March last year, more than 82,000 people are known to have succumbed to the disease in our country and nearly 2,8 million people are known to have been infected. This virus has caused

massive damage to the economy, disrupted education and increased levels of poverty and unemployment.

When combined with other preventative measures such as mask wearing and social distancing, the COVID-19 vaccine is the most effective instrument that we have to prevent deaths, reduce infections and restore the economic and social life of our country.

Evidence shows that COVID-19 vaccines reduce the chances of severe disease, hospitalisation and death. As I said in February of this year, no-one should be forced to be vaccinated. Instead, we need to use the available scientific evidence to encourage, I repeat, encourage people to be vaccinated to protect themselves but also to protect people around them.

At the same time, our occupational health and safety laws require that we ensure a safe working environment. This situation poses challenges for employers who want to keep their workers safe from COVID-19 while respecting the rights of those who don’t want to be vaccinated.

On the 11th of June this year, the Department of Employment and Labour issued consolidated directions on occupational health and safety measures in terms of the Disaster Management regulations. The directions provide guidelines for employers that intend to make vaccinations mandatory. Such employers need to determine the category of employees to be vaccinated, taking into account the vulnerability of employees owing to age or any comorbidities they may have, as well as the risks that are posed as a result of the role of the employee in the work that they do.

The implementation of any mandatory vaccination policies must in the end be based on mutual respect, which is the respect of the rights of the people, which achieves a balance between public health imperatives, the constitutional rights of employees and the efficient operation of the employers’ business. That is quite a delicate balance that needs to be struck.

Employees may refuse vaccination on medical or constitutional grounds. In such instances, the employer should counsel the employee and, if requested, allow them to seek guidance from a health and safety representative or a worker representative or trade union official, as well as a health practitioner. If

necessary, steps should be taken to responsibly accommodate the employee in a position that does not require the employee to be vaccinated. It could range from, either the employee continuing to work from home without contact with others, customers, suppliers or whoever, or to be placed in an area where they are not able to interface with others to spread the virus.

On the question of tenants being forced to take vaccines or risk losing their accommodation, like any other person, tenants have a right to decide whether they should be vaccinated or not.

Getting vaccinated is not only a personal choice about protecting yourself from infection. It is also about protecting others, including one’s own family, friends and coworkers, and allowing the whole of society to return to normal activity more quickly.

If we can vaccinate a large enough proportion of our population, particularly the adult population, by December, we can avoid another devastating wave of infections and restrictions on the economy.

Those who refuse to be vaccinated are increasing the risks for all of us, not only of a further resurgence of infections but of prolonged economic hardship and lack of recovery.

We therefore all have a responsibility to encourage all South Africans over the age of 18 to go to their nearest vaccination site today to protect themselves, to protect others and to help all of us get our economy back on track. Above all, vaccines are free in our country, they are safe and they are effective. I thank you, hon Speaker.

Rev K R J MESHOE: Thank you, Speaker and thank you, hon President for your reply. God the Almighty has given his people the right to choose, which is now being taken away through totalitarian governments around the world. A righteous and just God who wants all to be saved, does not force his salvation on anyone, yet emerging dictators are trying to force people to receive vaccines they don’t want. This we believe is tyranny that must be resisted by the people of the world.

Section 12(2)(c) of the South African Constitution says,

“Everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity,

which includes the right — not to be subjected to medical or

scientific experiments without their informed consent”.

My question to you, Mr President, is whether you are willing to help prevent a new form of apartheid where unvaccinated people are being discriminated against and excluded from some places, and whether you are willing to defend the constitutional rights of South Africans whose choice is not to be vaccinated.

The ACDP says no to a new form of apartheid based on proposed mandatory vaccinations, which is against the South African Constitution that is hailed by many around the world. Just to remind members that one reason why the South African Constitution has been hailed all over the world is because of the right to choose, which South Africans have been given.

Thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Meshoe is absolutely right. As he says, our Constitution, in section 12(2)(c) does give everyone in our country their rights in terms of their bodies and all that. The answer I gave to hon Meshoe’s question earlier would address precisely this. I have said that, in the end, nobody should be compelled

to be vaccinated. There are quite a number of companies that have now said that vaccinations are mandatory. They are also subjecting themselves to the directives that have been issued by the Department of Employment and Labour and have said that, yes, they recognise that their workers have their constitutional rights, but they are saying that they also have the responsibility to protect other workers against infection.

In the end, hon Meshoe, you will also agree with me that the rights that are in our Constitution are not absolute rights. They are rights that have to be exercised with due consideration as to how those rights affect the overall rights of all of us.

When we imposed a lockdown in March of last year, we knew very well that we were curtailing the rights of movement and the right of assembly of every one in our country. All of us agreed that, that was the right thing to do because we were safeguarding the population of our country against widespread infection. And, as it turned out, it did prove empirically and otherwise to have been the right step to have taken because at that stage we did level off the incidents of infections, and through that we saved many lives. I can say that many more South Africans would have died. It was incumbent on the

government to embark on this drastic action that led to the curtailment of the rights of all of us, starting with me as President and everyone else. Why did we do that? We did that to save lives.

Similarly, the issue of vaccinating or not vaccinating has to be looked at in that context as well. We are saying that vaccination has been proven, or vaccines have been proven to have a very positive effect in saving lives and reducing infection if it has set in anybody’s body, to a point where their lives will be saved.

It is for this reason that we are saying we would like to encourage everyone in our country to be vaccinated. I do not buy into the notion that this is being done by authoritarian, dictatorial governments around the world to force people to be vaccinated. If we do not take steps to encourage and get people to be vaccinated so that we can have what they call herd immunity or what I call population immunity, our health services could be over-run. We have seen that whenever we had spikes in infections.

We curtailed certain rights, including alcohol usage, movement and all that ... recognising that people have rights to be

able to imbibe alcohol, to go wherever they want, but we curtail them for that moment and say it is important that we should save lives.

Now, the directives that have been issued by the Department of Labour take into account a number of conditionalities or set out a number of conditionalities**,** and these are very much in line with our constitutional architecture; that we have got to respect the rights of others but at the same time ensure that the rights of the entire population are also upheld. There are various steps that we need to take. This is also precisely what we are saying to various companies. If you should encounter a situation where certain workers don’t want to be vaccinated, there are various steps that you need to take in respecting their rights but also by dealing with them in a humane manner, hoping that in the end they will be encouraged to be vaccinated so that they can save the lives of their own families as well as the lives of their coworkers.

This is the approach that is given rise to by the constitutional architecture that we have. It sets out rights but those rights also have to be balanced with the rights of the overall community of South Africans, and in that balance

we would find that there is a good way forward to enable us to save the lives of our people. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Ms X HAVARD: Hon President, despite vaccinations not being mandatory, one of the challenges of ... [Inaudible.] ... the vaccination roll-out is the slow uptake and the high vaccine hesitancy and the risk. What is the government doing to allay the fears of the citizens and to positively encourage citizens to be inoculated in order for the nation to achieve population immunity? Thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker and thank you very much for that question, hon Harvard. I should say that, yes, there is hesitancy in our country in a few pockets of our community and unfortunately some of it is also being encouraged and propelled by ... that are regrettably articulated by people like hon Meshoe. And, this has a negative impact on the issue of vaccinations.

Around the world, millions and millions of people are being vaccinated against COVID-19, and let’s say that if one looks at it historically in our own lives, we have all been vaccinated. From a very young age, each one of us — we may not remember this — have been vaccinated. Even before I was

vaccinated for COVID-19, I had to be vaccinated for yellow fever. I was told that my yellow fever certificate for previous vaccinations had expired and if I wanted to travel to certain countries, particularly on our continent, I should have that, and if not, then I should not bother.

So, vaccination is not a new thing to all of us. We have all been ... Even hon Meshoe has been vaccinated. I can bet my last rand. So therefore, for me it is bizarre. It is absolutely bizarre that, when we are dealing with a pandemic that is killing people more directly in ... our eyes and faces, we should be encouraging people not to be vaccinated, where it has been proven that vaccinations do actually save lives.

So, there is doubt about vaccinations. There are fears about vaccinations that are being spread around. Some of it is fake news. Our responsibility as government therefore is to spread the positive message about vaccinations and we are now embarking on a massive campaign for vaccinations. I have been asked by my office to personally participate in this and to encourage South Africans to be vaccinated, and I will. I will be speaking in all the languages of our country, to encourage everyone in our country to vaccinate because that is the only,

only safeguard we have against COVID-19 as a killer disease. So, we will be embarking on that and we will make sure that the message spreads. At the same time, I want to call on all of us as leaders, political leaders, community leaders, sports leaders, religious leaders or leaders of the faith, business leaders and every one to embark on a massive information drive about vaccinations. I have been so encouraged to hear a number of employers themselves saying that they are encouraging their workers to be vaccinated. I have been encouraged when I have heard leaders of the faith saying that, yes, they want to encourage, they are going ... they are encouraging members of the faith to be vaccinated.

We want to open more and more sites for vaccination, including, for instance, sites of prayer, pension sites and all that, so that more and more of our people get vaccinated. It is an important campaign that we are involved in.

So, I want to discourage those who are talking against vaccinations without real scientific evidence. We have scientific evidence that the vaccines work but we have no scientific evidence that demonstrates that vaccinations do not work or that vaccines do not work. In the absence of any, let us live up to being a nation that does things on the basis of

science, and on the basis of facts and knowledge. Other than that, we could be a nation which relies on rumours that vaccines don’t work. I don’t think that, as South Africans, we want to be defined as a nation that just relies on rumours**.** We now have evidence that where vaccines and taking action against coronavirus **...** where it has happened, even on our own continent, has led to disastrous results ... absolutely disastrous results, where many people have died unnecessarily. We have the science and we have some of the best scientists in the world that are leading the charge, that are demonstrating to the world that they know what they are doing and they know what they are talking about. They are being applauded at the World Health Organisation level. They are advising us about vaccinations, and I would that those leaders like Rev Meshoe should desist in discouraging people from being vaccinated and claiming Bible verses that says people should not be ... [Inaudible.] It is important that all of us should ... [Inaudible.] Thank you.

Mr W M THRING: On a point of order, Speaker. [Interjections.]

Mr S N SWART: I’m raising a point of order from the House. I would ask you to rule that it is not correct for the President to instruct our leader how to express himself. He has the

freedom of expression in this House and in public, and he has the choice as to ... on this issue as well. I did not want to interrupt the President but I am concerned about the aspersions that have been made. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Hon Swart, you know that is not a point of order. It is not a ...

An HON MEMBER: It is.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed, Mr President.

Mr W M THRING Point of order, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Point of order? Where are you? On the virtual ...

Mr W M THRING: It’s hon Thring on the virtual platform. Speaker, you previously ruled when one of the members of the ANC correctly said that anyone who casts aspersions needs to be brought to order by yourself. The President, Mr Ramaphosa, has cast aspersions on the president of the ACDP by ... [Inaudible.] ... that he is ... [Interjections.] ...

*Sesotho*:

Mof V T MALINGA: Baruti ba ditsotsi! Baruti ba ditsotsi!

*English*:

Mr W M THRING: ... vaccine hesitancy.

The SPEAKER: No aspersions were cast here. Please take your seat.

Mr W M THRING: He has. He has, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The third supplementary question will be asked by the hon N Chirwa through the virtual platform.

Ms N N CHIRWA: Thank you very much, Speaker. President, if we are honest, the pace of vaccinations is still painfully slow. You speak on the issue of vaccine hesitancy and we are all well aware that it is getting stronger and stronger, and this is largely as a result of the government’s poor communication of the need for and efficacy of vaccines in preventing serious illnesses. The truth is that government has not immersed itself in ensuring that communication and education, as primary tenets of primary health care and prevention, are administered adequately, and it is sad that even over a year

into this pandemic we still speak of education and communication in the vaguest of ways.

I want to ask the President, what have been the tangible steps that have been taken to ensure that messages on communication and education on vaccination are tailor-made to fit communities as per their geographics, as per their age, as per their cultural background, as per religious background, and in fact even to a point of gender, because even ... the country is well aware of the fact that even men are hesitant of vaccinations at a higher level. How have you taken tangible steps in ensuring that communication and education are tailor- made for the communities and the people of South Africa, which we haven’t seen happening in this country to date?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, Speaker. I would like to thank hon Chirwa for posing that question. In a way, it is more than a question. It’s actually more of advice and suggestions that she is putting forward, which I accept wholeheartedly. I agree that the pace of vaccinations has not really been living up to the objectives that I wanted.

However, many, many efforts are being made to ensure that we do hit the close on 300 000 mark. It’s been hovering around 250, 260, 270. I still want to see an increase in the level of

vaccinations on a daily basis. So, we need to up the tempo and the actual increase in numbers when it comes to that. So, I thank hon Chirwa for raising that.

I also want to thank hon Chirwa for reflecting on the communication part. The communication has been happening. You say I should give you the tangible steps. There are quite a number of initiatives that we have embarked upon but I will be the first to admit that they are not enough. They are not sufficient, and you raising the issue here on this platform of the National Assembly is sufficient to ensure that we increase the level of communication and tailor-make it, as you correctly say, in relation to the various groupings of our population, age, gender, as well as ensuring that we touch all those groups that have doubts about vaccinations.

So, we will be taking the advice you have given. In fact, that has already been articulated and I would like to see us execute a number of suggestions that you have put forward. I can hear that you are speaking very fervently about this because I am sure you have observed that there is a bit of weakness and we need to up the tempo. We need to do a lot more than what we are doing and we will be doing so. As I said earlier, I have also been roped in to participate personally

in relation to the message that we need to beam to our people about the vaccines. So, thank you very much, hon Chirwa. I really thank you for your suggestions in this regard. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr N SINGH: Thank you, hon Speaker. Mr President, I want to submit that words like encourage and mutual respect really don’t resonate with those that are antivaxxers**,** and we have to do more. We really have to do more than encourage and ask for mutual respect, hon President.

You know, I’m a law-abiding citizen and a God-fearing man, but when legal people and religious people get involved in a debate which centres around human life, when one loses siblings, friends and relatives in front of you, young people, I mean this debate should take another dimension, hon President.

Hon President, we speak about the Constitution and the rights. What about responsibilities? With every right there is a responsibility on those who do not want to vaccinate, to ensure that the majority of people who want to vaccinate are protected.

Hon President, you say that some of them can stay home and work from home. That is not possible when it comes to frontline workers. You have doctors, nurses, health workers, policemen and women who want to go to work. Why should others, even patients, be at risk from those who are not vaccinated?

Mr President, we have to do more and I’m appealing to you that

we do more as government. Thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Singh, I speak ... to support you and agree with you about needing to do more, as well as the point that you raise that everybody has a responsibility, particularly in relation to our rights. As we exercise our rights which we are given by our Constitution, we also have to exercise responsibility by respecting the rights of all other people. We should not just expect that the Constitution gives me this right and therefore in my activities, in my actions and in the way I lead my life I can trash other people’s rights.

That is the point you are making and we need to do much more. This is precisely what we are committed and determined to do; to make sure that as we exercise our rights as South Africans we need to know that the rights of others also have to be respected; that if you have not taken steps to be vaccinated

and to protect yourself, you are putting the lives of other people in danger. You are therefore violating the rights of other people, when there is a great opportunity for you to be vaccinated so that you don’t only protect yourself but you protect the lives of others.

I will not be surprised that in time to come, where if one is known to have violated the rights of others, they could be sued; that you violated my personal rights by infecting me, as we have seen with HIV/Aids, where people have either been charged or sued when they knew they were infected with the virus and then knowingly went about spreading it.

So, within the framework of our Constitution, it is important for us as citizens to know that as we exercise our individual rights we should not be selfish. Our actions should not be underpinned by selfishness and just seeking to advance our own personal rights. We should seek to protect and advance the rights of others, and it is for that reason that I spoke out strongly, particularly to what Rev Meshoe was saying. Others may think that I was casting aspersions on Rev Meshoe. Far from it! I am talking to a principle. Of course, everybody has the right to articulate whatever position they like. However, in the end it is the preservation of the lives of South

Africans that we are talking about here and this is what has made us as a government take action.

As I conclude on this issue, let me say that the government has been taken to court at numerous times by various interest groups, be it tobacco, be it alcohol, be it ... you name it, sporting organisations, and the courts have always said that the government has the responsibility to safeguard the health rights of all South Africans. The courts have always been very clear on this; that the regulations that we have set up in the national Disaster Management Act are aimed at advancing the interests and the lives of South Africans. So, what we are saying, or what I am articulating now, is aimed at achieving precisely that — saving the lives of all South Africans, which is the responsibility that any government has. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Question 10:

The PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, hon members, the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan is our blueprint for building a more inclusive, more equal, more resilient and faster- growing economy. Since I last addressed this House, we have made significant progress in turning that blueprint into a reality.

There’s still quite a lot of work to be done but we remain focused on a massive rollout of infrastructure; a targeted industrialisation strategy to increase local production; an employment stimulus to create jobs and support livelihoods; and the rapid expansion of our energy-generation capacity.

We are implementing a range of structural reforms to ensure that we all have a reliable power supply, cheaper data, abundant and clean water, and efficient-running ports and good infrastructure on rail.

Two weeks ago, the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy published regulations to raise the licensing threshold for embedded-generation projects to 100 MW. This was a defining development in energy generation in our country.

This will not only alleviate the immediate energy-supply shortfall that we all know we have, but will lead to massive investment in new projects and stimulate growth. It has been widely welcomed, not only in our country, but globally. The response has been hugely positive, as they saw that South Africa is serious about moving forward with the reforms that I had announced; and former Minister of Finance, Minister Tito Mboweni had also led in.

It will provide certainty to investors that the current electricity challenges will be resolved, enabling them as investors to confidently invest in new factories, mines and a whole number of other initiatives such as data centres, and what have you.

Two months ago, we announced that the National Ports Authority would be established as an independent subsidiary of Transnet, which will improve the efficiency of port operations and enable greater private investment in port infrastructure.

Discussions between the Independent Communications Authority – Icasa – and various role-players and licensees have been underway with the hope of reaching a settlement to enable the allocation of high-demand broadband spectrum to continue. I’m told that later this month there will be further development with an effort of reaching agreement on this matter.

I call on those who are part of this whole process, working together with Minister Khumbudzo Ntshavheni and of course Icasa, to do everything they can to reach agreement. A further thrust and impetus of our economy is reliant on this step being taken. And I would call on the litigants to all seek the

solution, so that we can put this matter to bed and open up our economy for the growth that we so require.

Significant work, Madam Speaker, is underway in a number of other reform areas, including in the water sector and the visa regime, and this work will show results over the coming months.

Alongside the reform agenda, we are implementing measures to support employment. The Presidential Employment Stimulus has supported close to 700 000 job opportunities to date, and largely to young people. This is unprecedented in the history of our country to have, in such a short space of time, opened up job opportunities to so many people.

A further R11 billion has been allocated to continue the job stimulus in the current financial year, and several programmes will begin implementation in the coming weeks. This includes the continuation of the Basic Employment Initiative, which has absorbed quite a number of young people in many schools, who have come in to assist our efforts not only to advance basic education, but also to deal with the pandemic as well as expanded support for small-scale farmers and workers in the early childhood development sector.

The violent unrest that occurred in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng in July dealt a further negative blow to our economic recovery. We know that, the impact, according to counting that has occurred so far, would amount to almost R50 billion to our GDP.

To respond to the devastation and suffering that the unrest caused, I announced a range of additional measures to provide relief to affected businesses as well as poor households. To support those who were left vulnerable by the pandemic and the unrest, we have reinstated the Social Relief of Distress Grant until March 2022.

We are also providing support to businesses who were affected by the unrest, through measures such as grant funding and additional support from the Unemployment Insurance Fund as businesses take time to reopen. We have also committed to back Sasria, our reinsurance state-owned company, to ensure that it is able to honour all valid claims in full.

We have had the Employment Tax Incentive, which has worked extremely well particularly in providing jobs to young people. This has now been expanded for a period of four months, and payment of PAYE and excise taxes has been deferred to help

businesses to recover. These measures are funded primarily through additional revenue that we received as a result of the strong performance of our mining sector and other exports.

The interventions that we have implemented have sustained millions of jobs, prevented the closure of a number of businesses, and provided relief to the most vulnerable in our society. These run into millions. Just to give you an insight thus far, close to 12 million people have applied for the social relief of distress grant, and SASSA is in the process of processing and paying all that. We still have a long way to go in our economic recovery.

The statistics released for the second quarter of this year are a reminder of our unemployment crisis and this is a major crisis. It is also a reminder of the extent of poverty in our country. While the interventions contained in our Reconstruction and Recovery Plan are necessary and significant, I will say now that they are not enough.

The time has now come for us to assess how far we have come. The time has come to reflect on the choices that confront us as a nation; and the time has come for us to take bold actions steps and action to achieve economic progress. That is the

singular focus of my mission and the mission of this government. And we will be articulating this in time to come. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr I K MOROLONG: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon President, your unwavering commitment to the fight against poverty, inequality and unemployment commands our collective respect. Public employment programmes provide value for their participants. However, President, these programmes are fraught with their own challenges. President ... [Interjections.]

AN HON MEMBER: He’s singing for supper.

Mr I K MOROLONG: ... you suggest that we must put in place ... to ensure that these public employment programmes are impactful and that they contribute significantly to the reduction of unemployment in this country. I thank you.

AN HON MEMBER: This one is singing for supper.

The PRESIDENT: Hon Morolong, thank you for your question. Yes, public employment programmes do have their place and own impact. We have chosen to continue with public employment programmes in a number of areas. What we have done now in

opening up opportunities for almost 700 000 people in our country, is actually quite unique because what we have sought to do, is to limit those challenges in public employment programmes you are talking about, that are done at the behest of service providers and facilitators. These ones are directly linked to existing institutions albeit government that had been able, and some of them not even government also going to existing institutions in the communities, but more directly aimed at addressing the challenges that we have. So, we had a twofold-type of approach; we have tested the system; and the system works extremely well.

The majority of those who have been placed in job opportunities have been, yes, through public sector institutions and others have been placed through community- based type of institutions – agriculture, community work, early childhood development centres and so forth. They have worked very well. I can safely say that we have not even had a sniff of acts of malfeasance in the current initiative that have been put in place. So, that has worked well and in my book, we need to massify and increase those - exactly the point you are making.

But, we also need to find space and ways to crowd the private sector in or bring the private sector in. The private sector needs to participate and they have been participating through the Employment Tax Initiative that, as I said, have worked very well particularly for young people. So, if you like, we have test-driven a number of these initiatives and they work. All we now need to do is to scale them up. It is this that in time to come, we will be looking at and coming up with further initiatives, as you asked for, to make sure that we address the challenge of unemployment. So, the process is underway, hon Morolong, to take further and more impactful steps with regard to this. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Mr President, it’s very clear from your answer in the House today that you have absolutely no idea whatsoever on how to create employment because you live in a billionaire’s bubble disconnected from the real world. Let’s be very clear, this is not a pandemic problem. It’s a presidential and policy problem.

Young people, Mr President, don’t want grants. They want jobs. Under your leadership unemployment has gone up every year to the point where now 75% of young people in this country do not have work. Mr President, why do you hate the young people of

South Africa so much that you want to keep inflicting this misery on them? Don’t you see your ANC unity project with the crooks and corrupt in your party is the problem? With this in mind, are you prepared today to apologise to the young South Africans that you and your party have shoved into the unemployment queue? Can you tell them today that you are going to walk away from the ANC’s mad job-killing policies?

The PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, what I was speaking to earlier, in case hon Steenhuisen was not listening, is precisely aimed at addressing the challenge that we face as a nation, of unemployment. The pandemic on its own resulted in a loss of two million jobs. It resulted in a negative growth of minus seven percent and we are not alone in this. Many other countries have been affected but we have carried a historical burden of unemployment, poverty and inequality. We carry that on our shoulders and that has emanated also from a number of years past. And it is this that we have said, through the various interventions, that we are determined to address fully.

For this government to have embarked on a job opportunity offering to mainly young people, absorbing up to 700 000 in a matter of less than 10 months - if you like a year – is quite

phenomenal. It needs to be recognised for the impact that it has had and is having on the lives of ordinary young people. Of course, we need to massify it. We need to expand it. What I take heart on this, is that we are on the right path.

Addressing the issue of unemployment in our country was never going to be a one-day event. We have more than half a million young people if not more – 750 000 maybe – who keep on adding up to the ranks of the unemployed in our country. Our economy has not been producing or creating jobs sufficiently to be able to erode that. We are acutely aware of this and we are not afraid to confront the reality of the situation that faces us. We are up to it.

The reforms that we have embarked upon and further reforms that are going to ensue are aimed at precisely ensuring that we create a broad spectrum of job opportunities for the young people of our country; and support businesses to be able to create jobs and erode what has not worked well in the past.

I’m committed and convinced that we will succeed. Cabinet members are also committed to this. Policies that we have are the type of policies that are aimed at doing that. Where our policies have needed to be straightened out, we are doing precisely that. That is why our Economic Reconstruction and

Recovery Plan, ERRP speaks to the reforms that we need to embark on.

We also need to look at trends that are unfolding globally. I don’t have the time now to be able to do that. We’ve been looking at that but we also need to look at our own. What is it that is happening in our own society and how do we respond? We are up to responding in a positive way to address challenges that our people face. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mrs C C S MOTSEPE: Mr President, the truth of the matter is that there are no measures to speak of, which government has introduced to grow the economy or create jobs. Instead, we see government introducing austerities, cutting budgets, cutting jobs at SAA, Denel and other state-owned companies, and reducing services. We explained as early as 2016 that government spending is a major contribution to the economy and the continued reduction in government spending is a direct reduction of that economy in a depressed economy. The consequences are job losses and continuing decline in the economy even without Covid-19. Besides privatisation programme that government is implementing and benefiting few individuals, mainly funders of CR-17, what has government

achieved by ... [Inaudible.] ... allocation of the budget? I thank you. [Time expired.]

The SPEAKER: The hon Mr President, I’m not sure if you did

hear the question.

The PRESIDENT: No, I did not hear the question, hon Speaker. I just heard a tirade.

Mrs C C S MOTSEPE: Can I pose the question again? Direct to the question.

The SPEAKER: Hon member, you had an opportunity to raise your

question and you decided to comment. I’m really sorry. I now

... [Interjections.]

Mrs C C S MOTSEPE: Sorry, Madam Speaker ... [Inaudible.] ... pose the question. I did. I said: What has government achieved by intensifying budget cuts besides some reallocation of the budget? Thank you.

The SPEAKER: I have allowed that and you will not repeat it. I had already stopped you from speaking after giving you five

more seconds. You will not do it again. I’m sorry, hon member.

Mr President, are you in a position to answer that question?

The PRESIDENT: Yes, hon Speaker. Thank you. I would say that the hon Motsepe says that we have allowed entities like SAA and Denel to shed employment and not funded them. Hon Speaker, that is far from the truth. This government has over a number of years funded SAA, and has always underwritten also Denel and a number of our state-owned enterprises. You know very well that, yes, government spending is a major element of ensuring that there should be proper stabilisation of our various state-owned enterprises as well as our economy. This government has done precisely that. We’ve sought to even save SAA from collapse and have spent a considerable amount of money even now.

She complains about austerity measures and I think those who do speak about this need to look at the balance sheet because quite often those who speak about these types of matters are completely oblivious of what the balance sheet of the state is all about. On one side there are liabilities and on the other side there are assets. Balancing the balance sheet requires quite a lot of doing. On the liability side there is a debt burden already, the debt burden that we have particularly in

servicing the debt, and it goes beyond that. It is about servicing the interest. Just to service the interest is almost getting to more than the budget of education and health alone.

When you look at the redemptions, the debt that we now have to pay off completely adds to that burden. It is therefore required that we look on the income statement side and see what revenue resources do we have. Are they increasing or are they diminishing? The increase of our revenue side of our financial statement is what everyone of us wants to see because with more revenue coming in, we are then able to support all programmes. We make sure that all the programmes that we have are well-supported and achieve everything that the nation desires. And when that revenue stream shrinks, it spells danger. It then requires us to go and borrow even more, and there’s no cheap money. As we borrow, we increase the level of servicing the debt and it begins to go beyond what we are even spending on education and health. That is the balance that many people are completely oblivious to.

So, I say to the hon member, as you reflect on these issues, and I’m glad that you are speaking to them which means that we are getting closer and closer a better understanding of how the finances of the nation work. Let us get closer to the real

issues but in doing so, let us not only look at the expenditure side. Let us also look at the income side and say, are we getting enough financial resources to be able to support everything else? If we are, then obviously everybody is happy.

The Minister of Finance has to juggle a number of balls in the air. The needs and requirements are often way above what we have as resources and that is what leads to prioritisation.

What is of greater priority? Everyone in our nation wants the issues that matter most to them to be key priorities and that is where the challenge comes in. It is an interesting discussion that should go on in the nation because it will be better that, as South Africans, we are more and more aware of the finances of the nation so that we can also know what limitations we have and what we are able to do. We can also be aware of the choices we have to make to advance our collective interest. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr V ZUNGULA: Thank you, Speaker. Mr President, we know that your presidency has coincided with an increase in unemployment. When you took office, the unemployment was under 30% and currently it is way above 30%. We note that even our country is at risk of social unrest due to the ever-increasing

unemployment especially among young people. Even the events that occurred in July were as a result of that unemployment. So, my question to you is: Out of the R200 billion guarantee scheme with the banks, how much has been spent on black businesses and how much has been spent on small businesses? What is the percentage spent on small black businesses in particular?

The PRESIDENT: Hon Zungula, in a funny sort of way, I thank you for raising the question on how the R200 billion we announced as a loan guarantee scheme has performed. The unemployment has risen. Yes, it is now at 34,4%. If you look at the expanded unemployment, it is way beyond that. It’s 43 or 44%. So, we face a massive problem and I look at this as a collective problem that we should all solve. Of course, in the end, it will be said to be President Cyril Ramaphosa’s problem and yes, as it should be. It is a big problem.

As I was saying earlier, hon Zungula, this is precisely what is on my continued radar screen. If there’s anything that consumes my attention on a minute by minute basis and hourly basis, it is this issue of unemployment particularly for young people. It is to this end that we came up with the Presidential Youth Employment Scheme that has started to work

very well. But of course, the burden is huge. At the current moment, even that will not immediately be able to absorb every young person who works, but for those who have been brought into the scheme, hon Zungula, they find that this is what is changing their lives. Changing young people’s lives is what we are about. Giving them hope; giving them skills; giving them jobs; and giving them a future. This is what we are committed to doing and we will do that. We want to do that in an even bigger and dramatic way, going forward.

Coming to the R200 billion, you will recall that we said when we announced our stimulus package, that we were setting aside R500 billion which was exactly slightly over 10% of the GDP. That in itself is a massive, massive amount of money. When we look at our peer countries in the world, we’ve done much more than many of our peer countries have done. We’ve actually done almost equal if not slightly better than some of your more- developed economy countries. In that regard, we demonstrated that we are willing and determined to address the challenges that our people and our economy were facing. It is for that reason that we came up with the loan guarantee scheme and announced R200 billion amount which government was prepared to underwrite and guarantee for a period that goes beyond five years and more, even up to nine or 10 years.

The banks were the agents that were meant to execute this. I have said even on this platform that I have not been happy and satisfied with the way the financial institutions in our country have been involved in executing this. They, themselves, said well, there was very little uptake and the uptake seemingly only amounted to R20 billion. I am not satisfied with that answer and I’ve said to them, let’s recreate them. Let’s make it more user-friendly and work is now underway to look at how best to make it more user- friendly.

I will not at the moment be able to tell you how many black businesses have been assisted. I have not delved and probed into that. All I know is that many black businesses need a lot of support because one of the things that they lack in is a historical malady that black people have. We don’t have collateral because some of the requirements of these types of funding require collateral and many black people don’t have collateral. So, we therefore have to answer there. We have to come up with creative answers to address the issue of lack of collateral because where will black people get collateral.

Many black people’s parents and their own origins were denuded deliberately by the laws of the past from building up wealth. Many black people have not built up residual wealth that would

lend itself to being the collateral that people can put on the table to be able to get funding.

If we work on the basis that – you know – nearly all the businesses, whether it is the biggest corporation or not, they all need funding. They all need bank funding, financial services funding. I hardly know of many businesses where shareholders themselves have to put in a lot of money. It is always borrowed money. This is what we were trying to enable - that borrowed money. Yes, we were prepared to take the risk as government that we will underwrite and give guarantee to this.

So, the uptake has been really poor and I agree with you that it has been poor. So, I have said that I would like to see the scheme being recast and recalibrated. I’ve said as much and have expressed my dissatisfaction also to the financial services sector about this because we saw this as an important intervention on our side. We therefore need to have a measure of relaxation particularly because government has said it is willing and prepared to guarantee and underwrite this. I am hoping, hon Zungula, that we will see some progress in this.

As regards the other measures of employment of young people, we are working on this. Believe you me, this is being worked

on as we are working hard to reposition our economy. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Question 11:

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Speaker, hon members, I would like to say that it is not correct to say that compensation has not been paid to the families of those workers who died at Marikana. According to the records of the Office of the State Attorney, claims totalling more than R174,4 million have been paid to the families of those who died and to workers who were injured or detained. This includes the payment of loss of support claims to the families of 36 people who died, the payment of 253 claims for unlawful arrest and detention and also claims for severe injury.

There are still several claims that are not yet resolved and are still subject to negotiation and the exploration of possible offers of settlement. The work has apparently been done to the audit. This includes further claims from 36 families for general and constitutional damages.

There is currently no agreement between the parties regarding those claims as an amount of almost R70 million has already been paid to these families in full and final settlement. The

state however has made quite a number of payments and there are further demands that are made and these are being processed as we speak.

While these ongoing engagements between the representatives of the various families and the state are underway, these claims have not yet been resolved and they are still being dealt with.

So, quite a lot of work continues in this regard. And there are a further 22 claims for unlawful arrest and detention, 13 claims for injuries and malicious prosecution and 40 claims for injuries that have not yet been settled either due to incomplete expert reports, outstanding records or disputed claims. Now the state is committed, I must say, the state is committed to settling all these claims.

Where an amicable negotiated settlement cannot be reached, these matters obviously would need to be adjudicated by a court.

Now Madam Speaker, the lack of progress in the prosecution of those responsible for the deaths of all those killed is indeed a cause of concern and distress.

I am informed that the prosecution team is in ongoing meetings with the Independent Police Investigative Directorate, Ipid, investigators as part of the prosecution-led investigations that gives effect to the Farlam Commission’s recommendations to the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA.

I am further informed that the National Director of Public Prosecutions has recently directed that the Acting Director of Public Prosecutions for the North West, Mahikeng, must provide a clear plan of action regarding the Ipid investigations of the events where 34 workers were shot and killed.

This is specifically intended to speed up and finalise the outstanding investigations so as to enable the NPA to decide on possible prosecutions emanating from the available evidence.

Now in exercising its responsibility to Parliament, it is important that the NPA should on a regular basis provide Members of this House with updates on progress in this regard.

It is important that this should be done because this matter is a matter of huge public interest. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Thank you, hon Speaker. Mr President, allow me at the very outset to advise you that next time you come on the platform you evacuate everybody from your house so that there is no shadow there. Now Mr President, thank you very much for your response and I must acknowledge indeed payments have been made but you must agree Mr President, it is nine years later. Lots of politicking and grandstanding appears to have been done in this country at the expense of those that have lost their lives.

My plea to you Mr President and question is: when are you able to go and address the families of these 34 deceased so that these families can have closure? And secondly, Mr President, what can you do to intervene to try and accelerate this process of making sure compensation is paid to these people?

And I do know that and I do acknowledge that you say the process is sometimes difficult. But it also appears that not much has been done and I am glad that you have clarified. What additional measures can be put in place, Mr President, to bring this matter to a closure so that there is no politicking and grandstanding and we bring closure once and for all to these families. Thank you, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker. And thank you, hon Emam. Let me start off by saying I don’t know what shadows you see because the only shadow I see is my own shadow as I move. That’s the shadow I see. And maybe through your spectacles, you are seeing other shadows. So, I have appeared in Parliament in person as you well know and would have preferred to have done so even now but conditions with regard to matters that I am dealing with have not allowed me and they have also not allowed my parliamentary counsellor, Dr Koornhof, to be in the House as he has always done so.

He has not been truant. He is totally committed to our Parliament and does a lot of work to support me. And I can assure you, he is not with me right now. And so, you can be rest assured that there are no other shadows. But if you see other shadows, I can assist that maybe your glasses do need to be looked at. Maybe you are seeing other figures.

But more seriously in relation to your question, it has always been my intention to go and to speak to the widows of the deceased workers. And to this end, yes, because this is a complex matter, which has various complex aspects to it, we have been in consultation with the variety of parties, initially with the union itself, the Association of

Mineworkers Construction Union, Amcu, and also with the National Union of Mineworkers, NUM.

And at times the two don’t see eye to eye. They differ on approaches and at times I find that one is caught up between the two because they are the two key role players. And I have been enabling, cancelled, supported by a number of faith leaders who have come to the fore and a number of other role players in society. And I don’t want to stick on playing the same record over and over and over again.

And all I want to say, it will happen and obviously everyone will say when is it going to happen. And I, hon Emam, navigate, actively navigating the various different role player’s approaches to this matter because there are various approaches here and I have been engaged with this process.

Yes, it is important that we should deal with this matter and bring closure to it, and also ensure that we work beyond, also to deal with the Farlam Commission also concluded and what needs to be done in relation to the reforms that should ensure not for the prosecutions and all of that. And that’s why possibly maybe for the first time our client precisely for various issues that are underplay.

Like you, I am not satisfied with the long period it takes. We also deal with the issue of compensation because its taking a long time and I would have wanted it to speed up. And would also insist that those who are involved in finalising it, let us not spend too much time squabbling over a rand here, a cent there and so forth. We need to make good by the people who lost their loved ones. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Mr S LUZIPHO: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon President, indeed it is without doubt that this is one of the most complex, emotive and sensitive issues. But also, quite regrettable one of the quite regrettable incident of our democratic dispensation.

In light of all the challenges that the fact that next year will mark the 10th Anniversary of the sad Marikana events. Does or will government consider some commemorative events beyond socioeconomic restitution so as to contribute towards unity, especially that of workers and all those who are affected directly or indirectly by such tragic event? Thank you very much, hon Speaker. I know we see shadows it’s Friday today.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you, hon Speaker. Yes, indeed it is Friday today. A number of proposals are being

made on how to commemorate the very sad event. And they range from installing a huge statue, which will be a memorial to those who passed away, to declaring a public holiday, to saying that Workers Day which is 1 May should now be done away with and the real Workers Day should be the day on which the

44 workers died. So, it’s a myriad of proposals that needs to be work through. And they are very complex and very emotional and they need to be approached with a great deal of sensitivity.

Though these are the issues that are at play that are being looked at on an ongoing basis. So, they are not easy. There are so many and they are very complex. But I live in the hope that answers will be found even just beyond the socioeconomic issues. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: President, the 2015 report of the Farlam Commission of Inquiry into the Marikana massacre made a number of recommendations about how public order policing could be approved. Now if the recommendations of the Farlam Commission report made in 2015 had been followed, we would have been able to avoid the disaster that we saw at the SAPS attempts in KwaZulu-Natal.

Similarly, if the 2018 report of the Mufamadi Commission into state security had been implemented your government may have been able to prevent this terrible violence and loss of life and livelihoods all together.

Mr President, I like to ask you and your team there, why have the 2015 and 2018 Farlam and Mufamadi reports been ignored for so long? And do you attempt to give the Zondo Commission report the same dastardly and concomitant treatment? Thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, thank you very much. The answer to the question posed is that the Farlam Commission recommendations are being processed and they are also going to be part of the examination that is now underway by the expert team that I appointed. Because a number of things that were not properly done in the recent period are mergers, not all of them are matters which the Farlam Commission had reflected on. And similarly, some of the matters that are of high level panel reflected on which was led by Dr Mufamadi are also part of that. The time that it takes in government to get things done is a matter of great concern to me as well.

And therefore, we need to speed up on things that needs to be done at urgency and if we do that we will be able to prevent further mishaps that could be done.

I am not able to comment on the Zondo Commission report because we have no report at the moment unless the Leader of the Opposition has a copy of the report and if he does I will be very delighted if he could share it with me. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr K CEZA: Let me take the question on behalf of hon Mokgotho, Speaker. President, the Marikana massacre is synonymous to you, President. Your email calling for the police to take concomitant action against workers resulted in the death of 34 miners. You implicitly acknowledged this when you spoke at the funeral of Mama Winnie Madikizela Mandela and promised to visit and engaged the Marikana victims. And somehow ask for their forgiveness. Why have you not engaged with the survivors of the massacre to date? And what steps have you taken to ensure that all those who must get compensation do actually get what is due to them? Thank you very much.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, I do believe that I did answer all the supplementary questions that the hon

member has raised from initial response to hon Emam’s question. If the hon member listened carefully he will find that all the questions that he now poses on a supplementary basis were actually addressed.

And just to repeat, the issue of compensation is a matter that has been done in part and it is still to be fully completed. I have also explained how the issue of even going there is complex because it has to be done in conjunction and in full collaboration with various role players, which is a matter that, in a way has stood in the way of even going there but it is a matter that I am attending to together with a whole hosts of a number of role players. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Question 12:

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Madam Speaker, hon members, the report of the Auditor-General on the state of local government finances in many ways underlines the extent and depth of the challenges facing the sphere of government that is closest to the lives of South Africans. Addressing these challenges must necessarily involve all spheres of government as well as communities and social partners.

For its part, national government has a range of support packages that address issues of governance, financial management, institutional matters and service delivery at local government level. The Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma recently tabled a report on the state of local government to Cabinet, which report used audit outcomes as one of the criteria to assess municipalities. The report identified 64 municipalities that have challenges across key performance areas of governance, financial management, service delivery, corporate governance and leadership.

The Department of Co-operative Governance and National Treasury are working with their provincial counterparts and municipalities to finalize municipality-specific support plans to address deficiencies identified in the state of local government report.

There are, in addition, several programmes to give effect to the Auditor-General’s recommendations. These include support to municipalities in the development and implementation of audit action plans, effective implementation of the Municipal Finance Management Act and improved revenue collection and management. Intergovernmental debt forums have been

established to facilitate solutions to the significant amount of debt owed to municipalities, but also debt that is owed to Eskom, the water boards and other water entities.

To address financial challenges, the Department of Co- operative Governance and Traditional Affairs collaborates with provincial counterparts and Treasuries to support municipalities with the development and implementation of financial recovery plans. The department is co-ordinating the amendment of the Municipal Structures Act to strengthen the functioning of municipal public accounts committees, which are entrusted to investigate unauthorised irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

The Municipal System Improvement Grant helps municipalities to strengthen institutional and governance systems, such as data and tariff management, policies and bylaws, records management, and ICT infrastructure. The Financial Management Improvement Programme provides technical support and places experts in selected provinces and municipalities focusing on issues such as asset management, budgets, revenue management, supply chain management and audit outcomes.

Through these and other efforts, all spheres of government are working to turn around the dire situation in many of our municipalities. A lot of concerted work is going into this because this has clearly proven to be one of the major challenges that we face, particularly with regards to dealing with the capacity of the state. As a country, we need to prioritize the local government sphere so that it may ultimately be able to stand on its own and meet the needs and serve the interests of the people of our country. Madam Speaker, I thank you.

Ms D R DIREKO: Thank you, hon Speaker, hon President, it gives us hope to note that our government is serious about providing quality services to our people and also ensuring that it turns around local government.

However, hon President, there are some of the municipalities, including the 64 municipalities which are classifies as hotspot municipalities and are repeat offenders with regards to the law. I would like to know if there is any relevant consequent management plan in place so that we can be able to deal with these municipalities which fails to implement government’s turnaround strategy and the recommendations of the Auditor-General? Thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, yes, hon Direko, there are processes that are underway, also to deal with what you call the repeat offender municipalities. There quiet a number of what you would call hotspot municipalities that continue to transgress the various processes on all these matters that I have spoken about, for example, financial management, asset management, proper revenue collection, corporate governance and leadership, because that is what bedevils the operations of these municipalities. Through the various interventions including the amendments that we seek or want to propose on the Municipal Structures Act, we will hope to get to grips ... I think a light and a torch is now being shown on our municipalities. I think we have come to a stage where municipalities that are continuing to show really bad performance will have no place to hide, including the personnel that are deployed there, mayor, municipal manager and procurement officers. They will have to live up to good performances or ship out. I think we have now reached that stage.

The people of our country are tired of municipalities underperforming and not providing good service to them. They now want good service delivery and they want municipalities that are going to be committed to serving their interests. It

is now crunch time. I believe that anyone who is deployed in that space needs to know that light is being shown on them, their performance and their various activities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Mr President, the only luck many for municipalities is the fact that they have dodged the ANC because your party failed to submit candidates in 94 municipalities. How lucky they are! What a complete blessing for them. I want to congratulate you on this, because this is the best Back to Basics plan for local government that you could have ever come up with.

I have just spent the last week in North West province visiting towns, and I have seen for myself the terrible effects of cadre deployment on municipalities. Local government in the North West has collapsed completely. The North West is ground zero for cadre deployment. Clover’s employees are the latest victims of cadre deployment as businesses had to leave the town because they couldn’t operate without basic services anymore.

Mr President, you have had three years of testimony of how devastatingly damaging your policy of cadre deployment has

been on local government and other spheres of government. Our question to you and your team there at the Union Buildings is: Why did you back Judge Zondo to keep this terrible policy in place knowing the damage it has done in South Africa?

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, thank you, I see that hon Steenhuisen has completely monopolised asking questions from the DA just for himself, meaning that most of the members in the DA are either being bludgeoned to submissions that they should never ask any question and that the supreme leader should be the only one asking questions. That’s a very sad image of the opposition party. Quiet sad. I would have truly appreciated and enjoyed getting questions from a number of other DA leaders, because that is how we sharpen leadership from all sorts of people on our parliamentary benches rather than just to have one person monopolising. How truly sad it is.

Having said that, I should start ... [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: On a point of order.

The SPEAKER: A point of order has been raised, Mr President.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, I would have thought that the President would have been aware of parliamentary desertions from Parliaments the world over ...

The SPEAKER: That’s not a point of order.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Whether it is the Prime Minister’s questions, it is the Leader of the Opposition that answers.

The SPEAKER: That’s not a point of order. Take your seat, hon

member.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: ... [Laughter.] ... Madam

Speaker, the problem is that we are not any other country. We are South Africa and we have our own unique way of doing things. We don’t tend to mimic what is done elsewhere. This problem of mimicking what is done elsewhere, including the shriek voice through which hon Steenhuisen raises his questions ... I would suggest that he should also go for voice training so that when he asks questions ... in a way that induces good answers ... [Interjections.]

Ms A STEYN: On a point of order.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Having said that, hon Speaker

...

The SPEAKER: Mr President, please, yes, point of order.

Mr D W MACPHERSON: On a point of order. Madam Speaker, I think it is very unparliamentary to make mention of the voice of the Leader of the Opposition and I think he must excuse himself in that ... [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member. Mr President, you may proceed.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, it is not up to me direct what the hon Acting Chief Justice will do in relation to the report that he is going to issue. I, like everyone else looks forward to a report that he will give. Those who went before the commission should be applauded for having gone there and speak freely and openly and express their views.

Similarly, I also took the time to express my own thoughts and did so by also reflecting on international practice that happens elsewhere, but tailor-made it to what we should be doing here in South Africa.

He wants to know why did I back the Acting Chief Justice in that regard, and my answer is that I did not back the Acting Chief Justice. I put forward a point of view. It could well be it’s a point of view as I think he has stated that he does not agree with. It would be of course terrible to live in a country where all of us agree on everything. The diversity that we have embraced is that there will be different points of view, and that is what enriches our democracy and everything that we do in our country. We should have different views on various things that are done and even on people who are placed in certain places of leadership. That is what democracy is all about. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, I want to address you. Speaker, if we are going to have a situation where the President and members of this House can reflect on one another in either the way that they look or the way that they speak, it’s a very slippery slope and it’s going to end badly. I really think that you should rule on what the President reflected on the hon Leader of the Opposition with regard to how he addresses the President. It is definitely not parliamentary and it leads to a very slippery slope. I would ask you to reflect on that and come back to the House, because it is not becoming of a member of this House. Thank you.

*IsiZulu*:

Mnu P M P MODISE: Abelungu bakwatile Mama uSomlomo. Abelungu bakwatile.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member, with regards to my understanding and what I have seen, this is not one of the do’s and don’ts. It is not one of the issues which has been raised. However, I will look into this matter and come back to the House. Thank you. I now recognise Ms Hlengwa, who is in the Chamber of Parliament, representing hon A Buthelezi.

Ms M D HLENGWA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, may the hon President please elaborate on which of these strategies have been implemented in the past and never worked. What will be done differently this time that will guarantee change? I thank you.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Speaker, I mentioned quiet a number of initiatives that I believe will lead to greater change so as to reposition our local government entities to a much better position.

For starters, we have had to give deep consideration to the Auditor-General’s report. The Auditor-General authoritatively

came up with a damning report on our local government, particularly with regard to the management of the financial resources. She has also gone beyond that. She looked at issues that impact on the leadership at local government level, looked at the issues of governance, and issues of service delivery.

The initiatives that we want to embark upon, working through all these issues through the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, collaborating with various other provincial counterparts which are at government level are the types of issues that are in the end going to stand us in good stead. Through these various efforts, we want to look at issues of really good financial management. Beyond that, look at the human capital side of things which are the people who are deployed to manage the finances of our local government. Those people who are deployed also look at the management of the assets of local government, how the budgets are crafted, revenue management and the supply chain. I believe all these matters are going to be looked at.

It is in a way giving credit to hon Steenhuisen’s observation that this is going back to basics. Yes, absolutely right. If we can achieve the Back to Basics programme at local level,

the achievements will really be phenomenal. This is where we would like to see real change. If I may say, this is where I applaud hon Steenhuisen you for having gone to look at a number of municipalities because it is not only the governing party that should have the monopoly on the right things that should be done. On that score, I would say your observation that we should go back to basics was right. My take is that we are determined to turn around many of our local government and it is also going to revolve on the various issues that I mentioned. The human capital side of things is precisely what we will need to focus on.

As local government elections process is concluded, we look forward to ensuring that the people who are placed in the key positions of running our local government are the type of people who will be able to address the needs of our people though service delivery, good governance and making sure that financial assets and resources of our local government areas are also promoted. Also, ensuring that local government area becomes the area where the investment process is enhanced and nurtured because investments do not take place at the Union Buildings. Investments in our country take place at the local government areas and it behoves therefore, on local government to create that conducive environment for investors to invest

in. Yes, we should be sad that some investors have been so dissatisfied with the offerings and the services that they have been receiving in some of our local government and have opted to leave and go to other environments. That is something that we should never see happening again, because investors choose certain areas in our country for the offerings and benefits that they can extract. Therefore, local government players, if I can call them that, have a responsibility to ensure that they promote investments at the lowest level and attract investors, and the only way to attract is to create a conducive climate at the lowest level with regards to how services are provided, how the incentives that they may have to offer are regulated and the governance ... when they look at a town, a city and a metro, they should feel attracted to it. That is the challenge that we are all going to have to face at local government level, because it is when we can do that that we will be able to enhance investments more generally in our country. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr I M GROENEWALD: Thank you, Speaker, hon President, noncompliance with legislation as highlighted in the Auditor- General’s report is of great concern. South Africa has a rule of law that when one thing is done irregularly, all the action that follow is irregular. Thus, small noncompliance has great

consequences. The 108 municipalities that have unfunded budgets did not comply with the Municipal Finance Management Act, MFMA, if tested in court and the court finds it to be irregular, these municipalities will deal with consequences such as illegally levied rates and taxes, which will have to be paid back to thousands of consumers. A 108 Councils will be dissolved and therefore it will be a 108 governments that will cease to exist. Although attention was given to the noncompliance, no action has been taken to prevent noncompliance but rather only crisis management. Will you as the president of the ANC take internal action against ANC councillors and mayors who will allow this noncompliance?

Thank you, Speaker.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: The problem of noncompliance and particularly having Councils that have unfunded budgets embarking on various projects and programmes is a problem that impacts and affects a number of municipalities in our country. You have cited 108, it could well be more than that. This is a common problem.

Another attendant problem to this is that many of our municipalities embark on unfunded budgets because they are operating in an environment where they have no revenue

collection base and only depend not completely largely on the equitable grants that they should get. This is a problem that affects many of them. Some of them are affected by this from a structural point of view.

If you look at our municipal architecture broadly, there needs to be a review because some municipalities were put in place but are unviable. From the beginning to the end, they should have been deemed to be unviable because a municipality should not only rely on grant or equitable grants from the centre.

Through the architecture of our Constitution, they should be able to raise revenue at their own level. A number of them are not able to do so.

There is another social problem where many of our people in various towns are poor, indigent, have no inherent income themselves, some of them are old, single-headed family and rely on grants and when it comes to services, much of the state assists ... [Interjections.] ... by offering a measure of electricity and water, they still can’t make ends meet. The spectre of poverty touches many households. We are, therefore, not able to be a source of revenue for a number of municipalities. That results in those municipalities going into unfunded budget territory and becoming unviable. They are

not able to collect rates and taxes. They descend into unviability.

We do need to have a review of our municipal architecture. It is something that I believe needs to be done possibly post municipal elections we are going to hold because many municipalities in our country will never make it other than receiving the grants that they get from the state. So, collectively, we need to look at that.

Having said that, it is actually quiet wrong for municipalities or Councils to operate on unfunded budgets basis. You find that in some cases, they frontload the payment of salaries. Some of them have wage bills that go to even more than 25% to 30% of their revenue. Once you get into that territory, it basically means you are bankrupt, and therefore cannot sustain themselves. This happens with hiring of more people than can be supported by the revenue, even if that revenue includes the equitable share of the grant. These are some of the challenges that we need to look at and find solutions for.

In agreeing with you, we should be saying municipalities should take heed not to embark on unfunded projects. I Know

it’s a great temptation, particularly when you have other huge direct costs that you have to pay for or expenditure items like salaries and so on. It then begins to crowd out the essential ones, which are service delivery, maintenance of assets and the development that needs to take place at infrastructure level.

Therefore, in this new era of municipal governments, we now need to focus on and all that. This is the area where the Department of Co-operative Governance and Treasury are going to be focusing more on. I have said, even from Union Buildings, this is an area I would like us to look at more closely, either through monitoring and evaluation so that we look at how municipalities are performing and see the extent to which we can take proactive action.

The good thing is that we have empowered the Auditor-General to be able to have a line of sight of this before things gets completely out of control. This time around, we want to empower local government. We want to ensure that, yes, we go back to those basics that even hon Steenhuisen has spoken about ... [Interjections.]

Mr I M GROENEWALD: On a point of order, Speaker.

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: My remarks on the way that hon Steenhuisen was coming across were by no means to be an aspersion on his person, and to the extent that it has touched a very sensitive cord, I would say that, yes, I withdraw those remarks so that they don’t even become an issue here in Parliament. Hon Steenhuisen as the Leader of the Opposition, as he is entitled to, is in the habit of taking barbs against the party that I lead on an ongoing basis, he comes across throwing assegais, arrows, etc. It is part of the bunter in Parliament, but to the extent that my remark about the way he comes across has been hurtful to him. I do withdraw that and I hope that we will still be able to - sorry, I am not of Member of Parliament – seat across him all the time and still be able to have wonderful exchanges. With that, Madam Speaker, I thank you very much. I move out of here ... [Interjections.] ...

Thank you very much.

Mr I M GROENEWALD: Speaker, on a point of order.

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr I M GROENEWALD: Speaker, the President didn’t answer my

question. Can I maybe repeat the question if he missed it?

The SPEAKER: No, we are done now.

Debate concluded.

The House adjourned at: 13:09