**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THURSDAY,**

**THURSDAY, 09 DECEMBER 2021**

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY***

The House met at 14:00.

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

**QUESTIONS TO THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT**

Question 13:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker. The trip that I have undertaken to the Russian Federation during my leave of absence was solely for the purpose of a scheduled medical consultation. As such, the consultations with my long-standing medical team was held as per the objective of the visit. I have been in hospital for the duration of my stay there. Thank you.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: Thank you very much, Deputy President, and thank you for the frank answer. May I say that

I find you in good spirit and good health and that makes me glad because I really do wish good health and continued good health. But, Deputy President, while you were gone, there was a lot of rumour mongering and going around. As you know perception in politics is everything. We were being told that you have been specifically poisoned by members within your own ranks who had to ... [Interjections.]. Please, give me a chance I am having a conversation with the Deputy President and he will answer me. Deputy President, I feel like it is time for you to be frank about it so that we can do away with this kind of rumours.

You have a medical team in Russia which for many people seems slightly James Blondish, if you would. I have a medical team too that looks after me there in the little company in Pretoria. We all know what the Russians are famous for. Deputy President, why are South African doctors not good enough when we know that we have some of the finest doctors in the world that look after us here? Our medical profession is one of the top in the world. Are the rumours that you were poisoned true?

The SPEAKER: Hon Mazzone, I have allowed you to make a statement. Actually, this matter has nothing to do with the question you raised. Your question was whether the Deputy

President met anyone in Russia other than his medical treatment. Now you are going on and on about poisoning which has nothing to do with that. I really want to say to you that you are out of order.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It’s just that the Deputy President mentioned that he was hospitalized and that’s why I brought it up because they must always collate. Deputy President, you said that you were in hospital the whole time that you were in the Russian Federation. Could you tell us if you met with any doctors that deal specifically with poisoning? Could you also tell us if you met with any people that deal with the nuclear deal that is said to be underway or attempted to be underway with the South African government? Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Actually, you know that you are out of order, hon. And you know it! You know it and all of you know it. [Interjections. No, no no! The question is, the Deputy President was in Russia, it says. Where is the question?

Actually, you are asking whether he met anyone whilst he was in Russia. Yes, he has responded by saying he was in Russia and obviously he had gone for a check-up, but now you are asking whether he met any doctors. If you are in hospital you

are attended to by doctors, of course. Then you are introducing a different matter of nuclear, what and what. I think you are really out of order and please allow me to protect the Deputy President.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, you are absolutely in your right to protect the Deputy President although I think he should answer the question. I would like your ruling referred to the Rules committee. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Okay, let it be referred to the Rules committee. You are part of the Rules committee and you will discuss the matter and come back and advise me on it. I honestly believe that it is not correct to discuss health-related issues of members. The Rules committee must discuss that matter. Really, what we are going to be doing the next thing is to want to know if so and so is sick and what is it yet we all know that there is something called doctor-patient confidentiality. I think it is insensitive and improper. I think the Rules committee must discuss the matter and advise me. But from where I am sitting it is totally unacceptable to deal with a matter that is related to somebody who is not well. [Applause.]

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, I rise ... [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Speaker, my hand is up. It is Minister Zulu. My hand has been up forever.

The SPEAKER: I’m sorry, Minister Zulu, I did not realise that

your hand is up. Table, may you help me. I haven’t seen that.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, while they weigh that out I do just want to share with the Deputy President that I really do mean it when I say that I am very glad to see that you are in good health and I really did mean it when I say that your good health continues.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Mazzone.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Speaker, respectfully to the Speaker and respectfully to the House, we have a problem. Whenever we raise our hands they are not recognised. This is day three that I have been trying to raise this issue. I am requesting that the staff who are there can they please see our hands and recognise us because when you have

patronising people on the platform we would like to protect ourselves also because this is patronising.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Minister. Table officer, may you please assist here. It happened the day before yesterday and it is happening again today. Thank you very much.

Mr T S MPANZA: Thank you very much, hon Speaker for ensuring that there is order in the Chamber. Mr Deputy President, having undergone your medical consultation and upon your return to the country, can the Deputy President assure South Africans that he continued to discharge his responsibility as the Deputy President of the Republic? Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Speaker. I am in front of the House strong enough to discharge my duties. I’m sure the House has seen me in different occasions out there performing my duties as the Deputy President. What I can say is that as a person concerned I am grateful with the progress that I have made up to so far with regard to my health. Thank you very much.

Ms N V MENTE: Thank you very much, Speaker. Deputy President, as the EFF we have no reason to doubt you when you say you went to Russia seeking medical help. Our question has nothing to do with your health issues and we wish you well. Today, South Africa is under siege from the new variant of the coronavirus. Pfizer, the vaccine that is being used by the majority of South Africans, is reported to be not effective in its two shots and you need a third short to this particular variant. However, Sputnik on the other hand is reported to be very effective against this new variant and the Delta variant.

The SPEAKER: Hon Mente, I am sorry. The issue you are raising has nothing to do with the question before the House. If you want to raise that matter you must submit a new question. In the context of this session it is out of order.

Ms N V MENTE: No! Speaker, please, allow the Deputy President to be the one saying that. You can’t answer the question for him.

The SPEAKER: I will not allow you ...

Ms N V MENTE: No, Speaker!

The SPEAKER: I will not allow him to respond to a question which has nothing to do with the initial question on the Order Paper

Ms N V MENTE: It is in connection with medical health. We all want [Inaudible.] from Russia. So, the Deputy President can help us.

The SPEAKER: Hon Mente, Rule 142(6) states that a supplementary question must arise directly from the original question and the reply given thereto may not constitute a new question. What you are raising is, in fact, a new question.

Thank you, hon Mente.

Ms N V MENTE: It is not! I am asking a question pertaining to the Russian medication as he has received such as well.

The SPEAKER: Hon Mente, please, submit a new question. Thank you, hon Mente. Please and respectfully! Thank you.

Ms N V MENTE: I will take it up.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr N SINGH: Thank you, hon Speaker. I thought it would be hon Hlengwa who would do it. I don’t know if she is in the virtual platform.

The SPEAKER: What I have here is hon Singh.

Mr N SINGH: Alright! I haven’t gone to Hone Affairs yet to

change my ...

The SPEAKER: If it is hon Hlengwa he is just behind you.

Mr N SINGH: No, not this one, but the other Hlengwa.

The SPEAKER: Okay! Thank you.

Ms M D HLENGWA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Hon Deputy President, relating to your medical treatment in the Russian Federation, why should the South African taxpayer carry the costs for you to receive such medical treatment? I thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. I have 100% covered the costs of my treatment and travelling. No money was paid by the South African government towards my treatment. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Question 14:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, the underlying message in the Minister of Finance’s Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement is that it is fiscally unsustainable to continue bailing out state-owned enterprises in the context of diminishing fiscal resources and competing developmental priorities.

Instead, any form of support provided must focus on transforming these SOEs, and ensuring that they are put on a path of financial and operational sustainability in a manner that does not require constant bailouts from fiscal resources.

Our efforts as the Eskom Political Task Team are focussing on supporting Eskom in the implementation of the Eskom Turnaround Plan aimed at repositioning Eskom, improving operational efficiencies, plant maintenance, and ensuring that debt and liquidity challenges are addressed.

While government will continue to provide the necessary support required, the Eskom leadership, including the board, has the primary responsibilities of driving organisational change, effecting governance improvements and ensuring that the organisation is placed on a sound financial footing.

The fiscal framework has made provision for targeted support for Eskom to minimise negative impacts and ensure that Eskom is sustained as a going concern.

In terms of the recent announcement by the Minister of Finance, there will be no negative implications for Eskom as this will not negatively impact what has already been provided in the current fiscal framework in terms of the R230 billion support package announced in the October 2019 Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement. To date, R136,7 billion of this support has been disbursed to Eskom, with the remaining disbursements to be provided over the next four fiscal years.

The Minister of Finance has approved a special dispensation to allow Eskom to access additional guaranteed debt of

R42 billion in 2021-22 and R25 billion in 2022-23, which falls within the existing guarantee facility of Eskom.

This will provide Eskom with the necessary borrowing power in order to honour its obligations when they become due. In addition, Eskom has been allocated R21,9 billion in 2022-23 and R21 billion in 2023-24 to assist with the redemption of debt and interest.

Eskom continues to implement various levers to improve its internal efficiencies and ensure that it reduces its cost structure while enhancing its capabilities to deliver on plant maintenance and new build programmes to keep the lights on.

While challenges remain, there is discernible progress in some of the key areas of organisational transformation, including financial savings and the recruitment of management and technical skills required by the organisation.

We are advised that Eskom achieved a saving of R14 billion in the 2020-21 financial year, and a target of R21 billion has been set for the 2021-22 financial year. Various initiatives are being pursued to ensure that the target is achieved.

Government is working with key stakeholders to adopt a unified approach to Eskom’s financial sustainability. This approach includes cost savings within Eskom, the recovery of arrear municipal debt, the achievement of a cost-effective tariff and further reduction of Eskom debt.

This work will be further guided by the Presidential State- Owned Enterprises Council as it identifies specific interventions aimed at stabilising and strengthening state- owned enterprises’ financial and operational performance,

reduces reliance on the fiscus, and ensures that some of the plants are repurposed to align with national priorities.

In respect of municipal debt, Eskom is implementing an active partnering model to assist municipalities with maintenance of their own infrastructure and revenue collection to enable the payment of the bulk electricity account. Alongside all these support interventions, various models and options are currently under consideration to resolve the current debt challenge facing Eskom. Once finalised, government will make the necessary announcements accordingly. I thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The first supplementary question will be asked by the hon N F Shivambu on the virtual platform.

Ms N V MENTE: Speaker, it’s Mente. I will take the question. Deputy President, the narration that you have just given is not the first time we are hearing that story. In 2019, the former Minister of Finance invited Harvard professors to draft economic reforms for National Treasury. That paper recommended consolidation and entrenchment of neoliberal-driven policies, centred on austerity and the privatisation of South Africa’s strategic public assets in energy, rail, water and sanitation.

Again, this is not the first time, because the same thing happened in 2006 when so-called economists from American universities played a major role in shaping Treasury and South African economic policy.

There is overwhelming evidence that these policies have failed. Don’t you think the decision to stop assisting state- owned enterprises, many of which failed because of clear political leadership and lack of management skills, such as the CEO of Eskom, is designed to collapse and sell SOEs for less than their value and collapse the state’s ability to play a strategic role in the economy? Do you think it is fair – that it is just for the citizens – given the highest levels of unemployment in South Africa, in particular that of young black people? Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The hon President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Deputy President, I’m sorry.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes, I am still Deputy President and I will remain Deputy President. [Laughter.]

The SPEAKER: I’m really sorry, Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, well, as I have said, the commitment that we made in 2019 to supporting Eskom still stands. This was announced by the former Minister of Finance. This assistance is still valid for the next four years, but it is correct for the Minister of Finance to say that these bailouts, from time to time, are not sustainable. At some time, the leadership of this utility must work hard so that this utility is self-reliant and in a position to make a profit.

I am convinced that the current leadership of Eskom and the board – of course, working under pressure and duress – is trying its level best. I am supportive of them and I can tell, with all due respect to all those who are criticising the leadership of Eskom, that this is the best leadership we can have that can currently transform and turn around Eskom. I am happy with the way they are transforming the organisation, I am happy with the cost-saving measures that are under way in Eskom, and I am happy with the amount of savings that they have made and will continue to make, but this will take a bit of hard work and a bit of support from all of us.

We must understand that these criticisms stem from the load shedding. Hon members and fellow South Africans should understand that the current leadership of Eskom found a utility and found these plants not in a good state in terms of maintenance.

What is currently happening is that, as this leadership plan how to maintain these plants, there are unplanned outages that disrupt the entire plan. I am happy that they are managing the process. They are bold in announcing when there are unplanned outages. They don’t hide the truth from us. This is what is good about this leadership and I think we should support the Eskom board and the Eskom administrative leadership.

There is no intention on the side of government to sell Eskom. Eskom must be supported, as we have done. It is very important in the life of the economy of the country. I don’t see anything in our vocabulary of starting to think about selling Eskom.

The President has appointed a state-owned enterprises council. This council is tasked with the assignment of looking at the best options and the restructuring of all state-owned companies.

There is duplication. A number of these companies repeat one or two things. We said to the state-owned companies’ council that they must look at this duplication and advise Cabinet. We think that, after the assessment, they will look at those that still need to be maintained and those that need to be discarded. The final aim is for state-owned companies not to be reliant on the fiscus. They must be able to deliver services and they be able to make money, because they are all in business. It’s unheard of, year in and year out, for these state-owned enterprises to expect to be bailed out by government. So the statement by the Minister is correct. Thank you very much.

Ms P N ABRAHAM: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Deputy President, the response that you gave on a matter that touches the lives of ordinary South Africans is appreciated. It demonstrates that your hand is on the pulse of the challenge.

Deputy President, the principle which underpins the transformation of the situation at Eskom would appear, from your reply, to be grounded on financial and operational sustainability, linked to a turnaround strategy in that efficiencies and debt maintenance are key in this regard.

Given that there are existing dangers to efficiencies and debt

maintenance, what specific mechanisms in the turnaround strategy will assist in mitigating against these dangers? I thank you, hon Speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, there are two things that we can highlight which are very important in the turnaround strategy. Firstly, Eskom has started to recruit the necessary skills that are needed at a power station level. I’m sure that with time we will see an improvement in the running of these power plants. Secondly, Eskom has taken upon itself to cut costs within the organisation. There are certain positions that, through natural attrition, became vacant and Eskom did not fill those positions, because it was quite clear from the beginning that the staff establishment of Eskom was just too big, and through negotiations with the unions ... Now, regarding natural attrition as posts become vacant, some of the posts are abolished if they are not very important. There were a number of areas where there was wastage. Eskom has made a point that that those areas are attended to.

On the side of the political task team, we have brought together government departments that owe Eskom. We must say that, thanks to Minister De Lille, the Department of Public

Works, co-ordinating all departments, has managed to pay what is due to Eskom.

In the intervening period, money that came from government departments that was due to Eskom and money that came from municipalities that was due to Eskom went up to over

R4 billion. This is progress but not enough, looking at the total amount that is owed to Eskom. So we can say, slowly but surely, Eskom is turning around.

What now needs to happen is that they must step up their maintenance plan, so that whatever maintenance is done is according to plan and that they reduce unplanned disruptions of the plans. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy President. The third supplementary question will be asked by the hon M G E Hendricks from the virtual platform. Hon M G E Hendricks from the virtual platform? Okay, we then proceed and entertain the last supplementary question. It will be asked by the hon W W Wessels from the Chamber. Hon Wessels?

Mr W W WESSELS: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Deputy President, on the one hand, we know that Eskom has spent over R1 billion

on diesel during November and we know that this practice will diminish all the savings which you referred to previously. On the other hand, Eskom has applied for an electricity tariff increase of 20,5% to take effect from 1 April, if approved.

Do you, Deputy President, regard such high increases in electricity tariffs as sustainable to keep the utility afloat, or would you agree that this will be detrimental to economic growth and development and will lead to job losses and poverty, as the end-user consumer will feel an increase of much more than 20,5%? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker, and thanks for the question. The hon member would appreciate the fact that it is becoming more and more expensive to run these old plants.

The maintenance of these plants is very costly for Eskom, and, of course, when there are unplanned outages, Eskom will have to activate some of the power stations that are powered by diesel and, in certain instances, pump water for our hydro power stations. Of course, this is a cost for Eskom.

An intervention that the President made was to announce that private companies now have the permission to generate up to

100 MW of energy to relieve the pressure on Eskom. We have now

opened a window for independent power producers to also connect to our grid. We have now also allowed municipalities, where possible, if they have the financial muscle, to generate energy so that there is competition. If there is competition, I’m sure the price of electricity will come down. But, for now, it is only Eskom which is carrying the pressure of having all these old power plants, which are very costly to maintain. This, of course, becomes very costly for the consumers of electricity.

Now, I’m sure, down the line, the route that we are taking of allowing municipalities, allowing independent power producers and allowing companies to produce up to 100 MW will lessen the burden on Eskom. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: I thank you, hon Deputy President. Earlier on I invited the hon M G E Hendricks, who is on the virtual platform, to raise the third supplementary question. He was unable to do so. I am told that he is on the virtual platform. He had a problem with his system. Hon M G E Hendricks, I now invite you to raise your question.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Thank you very much, hon Speaker, and thank you very much for the indulgence. We are very impressed

with the responses of the Deputy President, but we are very concerned that poor people will be marginalised if electricity provision is privatised. What assurance could the Deputy President give the nation that indigent people will not be penalised and that that provision is just for the rich? Thank you, Speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. That is a matter that municipalities will have to discuss, because they have now been given permission to generate electricity. They can generate electricity from their own resources, they can generate electricity through partnering with the private sector, or they can source energy directly from independent power producers. But all the three models that are available to municipalities should not be costly for the consumer at the end of the day.

Whether it is a municipality that is generating, whether it is a private-public partnership or whether it is direct outsourcing from an independent power producer, it must not be a burden on the consumer. This is going to offer options.

Eskom will always benefit from all the options that are available - in the current form and in the proposed form that

it must unbundle, separating into three entities: generation, transmission and distribution.

Of course, everyone who is producing energy in the country will have to transport this energy. Whoever goes to Eskom will say: “I request to transport this energy to point A and I am prepared to pay X amount.” This is because Eskom does own the transmission lines that you see all over here. That business is going to be lucrative going forward.

As much as Eskom won’t be making much money on generation, it will continue to make money on transmission. Eskom might want to give distribution to municipalities to distribute. Most of the infrastructure, in terms of distribution, belongs to municipalities. So I don’t really see a situation in which the consumer will end up paying more for electricity going forward. Instead, by opening up competition, the prices will come down. Thank you very much.

Question 15:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker, the government’s Integrated National Electrification Programme makes provision for planning, financing and implementation of electrification projects in prioritised municipal spaces to ensure that

communities have access to electricity. This is a programme that supports municipalities with electrification infrastructure and capital subsidies to address electrification backlogs in permanently occupied residential dwellings.

The government will continue to co-ordinate and provide targeted support to municipalities to ensure that there is a reliable electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure. With that said, it is important to note that as part of reforms in the energy generation sector, the government has empowered municipalities to generate their own electricity to improve the country’s overall generation capacity. To this end, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy has developed new regulations that are aligned with the Electricity Regulation Act, for municipalities to procure or develop their own power generation.

In October 2020, amendments to the new regulation in terms of section 35(4) of the Electricity Regulation Act, were gazetted. Through these amendment municipalities can now procure their own energy in three different options using their own money, through private partnership and through procuring from independent power producers. Should

municipalities want to procure energy, they must first conduct a thorough feasibility study to determine the best option to pursue.

When it comes to long terms sustainability municipality must demonstrate diversity in their customer base and that electricity revenue collection meets the electricity operations and energy buying costs. This is critical to ensure that consumers are not burden with high electricity tariffs as compensation for non-paying users. A further amendment has also been introduced for facilities up to hundred megawatts to generate up to hundred megawatts without the need for a generation licence. This was intended to urgently address the current problems of power shortages. These amendments are aligned to the Integrated Resource Plan of 2019, which envisages the procurement of more than 31 300, megawatts of new generation and storage capacity between 2020 and 2030.

While Eskom as a national power utility, with the required baseload will continue to play an important role in energy generation, a diversified, open and a competitive energy generation environment will go a long way towards addressing electricity supply constraints that impact negatively on our economy and the quality of life of our citizens. It is

expected that with additional energy into the grid, the negative impact of load shedding will be avoided and thereby easing the burden on the people and the economy.

The Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent continues to provide the necessary support to municipalities in addressing infrastructure challenges. This includes maintenance and refurbishment of existing infrastructure and development of technical capacity through skills development. Where necessary, municipalities will be able to leverage funding streams to invest in the generation and distribution of infrastructure including partnership with the private sector and the government Infrastructure Fund.

We remain optimistic that the newly elected local government leadership with their representative organisation South African Local Government Association, Salga, will assist municipalities to generate or procure their own energy. Thus, promote sustainable local economic development, job creation, and effective delivery of service at local level. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Ms D R DIREKO: Hon Deputy President, there are municipalities that have historical debts with Eskom and it is because of

lack of internal controls within the municipality, it is because of lack of revenue collection or it is also a failure of the municipality to manage their funds.

I would like to check with you if there are any relevant processes in place to build internal capacity within the municipality in order for them to generate their own electricity?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Currently, as we speak, we have more than 20 municipalities that accounts for R38 billion debt to Eskom. This include the known Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality. We have been frequenting to Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality together with Eskom and finally there were court judgements that were passed. These court judgements were saying Eskom must take over the distribution of electricity in Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality. We had to assist Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality together with Eskom to sign a service level agreement that will allow Eskom to distribute electricity and to collect revenue and take what is due to Eskom and give the municipality what is due to it. So, we think this is the best option going forward. That of partnering with these municipalities that are owing Eskom.

Until these municipalities develop the required capacity which Eskom in this instance can assist municipalities to train their personnel that can look after this infrastructure and upgrade this infrastructure. I think at that if municipalities have a got a positive balance sheet, they can then think of generating electricity on their own. But they have to be taken along. And the only utility that is avaible and that can help these municipalities is Eskom. Because these municipalities are owing Eskom.

On our side we are ensuring that all government departments pay municipalities. If electricity is distributed by a municipality in a school, the Department of Education must pay. If electricity is distributed by a municipality in a government building whether provincial or national, that department must pay to the municipality. I think we are going to improve the financial situation of municipalities and prepare them to take generation capacity on their own. Thank you very much.

Mr K J MILEHAM: Deputy President, it’s no secret that municipalities and more specifically metropolitan municipalities are challenged by Eskom’s distribution network within their own municipal jurisdictions. Amongst other

issues, this affects the costs of electricity because people on one side of the street where there is municipal supply may pay more than people on the other side of the street where there is Eskom supply.

Another issue is that electricity provision is the only form of credit control that a municipality really has. Schedule 4(b) of the Constitution notes that electricity reticulation is a municipal competency. Would you agree that municipal control of the electricity distribution is necessary to ensure uniform pricing and better maintenance of the electricity infrastructure and if so, what is being done to facilitate the transfer of such distribution to those municipalities that have the financial and technical capabilities and resources?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon member, I don’t think there is a problem. The only challenge that is currently there is that these municipalities are owing Eskom. Because they buy the electricity from Eskom and sell it. In this case, they sell the electricity and people connect illegally and steal the electricity from the municipality. The municipality then can’t pay Eskom.

So, you can argue and say Eskom gives these municipalities the chance to distribute electricity because according to the Constitution, it is the municipalities that must sell and distribute directly to the consumers. But these municipalities have failed. Hence, the partnering model that we are trying to forge between municipalities and Eskom so that municipalities can pay. After settling their debt, probably, this will revert back to them. Because it’s an arrangement that has been done through a court order. It’s not something that is going to be permanent. It should go up to a certain level. After having paid what is due to Eskom, perhaps the partnering model would seize and the distribution capacity will revert back to municipalities.

Yes, you are correct, it is the duty of the municipalities to reticulate energy and sell it to the public. But the public is not paying for the electricity usage. However, the public connects illegally in the municipalities infrastructure. You can see now a number of areas where communities are saying to municipalities no, let’s do away with the debts, the money that we owe. But what will happen to the municipalities when it comes to the money that must be paid to Eskom?

Yes, we can vouch for that but currently, we have got almost R40 billion that is being owed and that money must be paid. We are going to insist that Eskom wants that money. That’s what we can say. Thank you.

Ms E N NTLANGWINI: Thank you Speaker. Deputy President, all the electricity reforms that have been proposed from the proposal to allow municipalities to generate own electricity to breaking up Eskom into three entities as well as the illogical support of independent power producers seems to suggest that government has all but given up on Eskom ever recovering to the top energy generating entity it once was in the world.

In short, to medium term Deputy President, do you foresee a reduced role for Eskom in electricity generation in the country? If you do, why is the government not being upfront and honest to its citizens that the ultimate aim is to strip Eskom in order to dissolve the electricity generation through private companies and municipalities?

*IsiXhosa*:

Enkosi, Somlomo weNdlu yoWiso-mthetho yeSizwe.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker. I must repeat that it is not the intention of the government to dissolve Eskom. But also it’s not the intention of government to see Eskom monopolising the generation of energy. If we allow Eskom to monopolise going forward, any mishap, anything that goes wrong with Eskom will affect the country there and there. But if we allow competition in the generation of energy ... Of course, Eskom will always be ahead of everyone because it has the necessary infrastructure. I said before that Eskom has the transmission lines. In certain cases, they are still strong.

And whoever wants to transport energy must pay Eskom. Whoever is going to generate energy, Eskom is still in business. So, there is no way of destroying Eskom in this case. But we must reduce monopoly so that we put our economy on a safe path. So that if there is any mistake in Eskom generation capacity, then the other generation facilities in municipalities, independent power producers can augment the shortage. Thank you very much.

Mr I M GROENEWALD: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Deputy President, it is not only citizens who steal from the municipalities and do not pay for the electricity which contributes to low revenue and the outstanding debt to Eskom. Provincial and national government departments equally owing

municipalities hundreds of millions of outstanding in charges. For example, the Matatiel Local Municipality that is owed R96 million by government departments, but it cannot move forward with an electrification project because the municipality owes Eskom R16 million. Once the municipalities do generate their own electricity, the department’s outstanding debt to municipalities will assist to implement successful and sustainable own electricity supply.

When will the outstanding historical debts of departments be paid or must the taxpayer keep on to foot the Bill at local level?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker. Through the Political Task Team on Eskom, we have assembled a number of departments around the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Cogta, including the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. We have gone through all what is being owed to Eskom and municipalities. We have found out that municipalities can’t vouch for what they purport to be owned to them by some government departments.

Municipalities have got a problem with their metering systems. They are just thumb sucking a figure, to a point where we have

even appointed an ombudsman to try and negotiate. Because there is no metering but municipalities will say “You are owing us hundred million.” Then we say prove to us that we are owing you an amount of R100 million. But they can’t prove because there are no proper metering systems.

We are mediating. But I can tell you, - In my first reply I said “we must thank Minister De Lille,” because a number of departments have paid. There are just a few that are outstanding where municipalities can’t explain and cannot justify why they say a department is owing a certain amount. Thank you very much.

Question 16:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, equitable land restitution continues to be a matter of concern for us as government. In our previous responses to Parliament we indicated our commitment to accelerate the resolution of old order claims. However, there is still much work to be done and this has been compounded by the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the past financial year. The District Six development is one of the postsettlement restitution cases that has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A framework agreement was reached to develop dwellings for claimants who opted for restoration. This agreement was reached between the City of Cape Town, the District Six Beneficiary and Redevelopment Trust and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development for the development of the land in a phased approach. The District Six Reference Group was then established to oversee the phased development.

As government we acknowledge the fact that there has been delays in the District Six development project and there is a need to address such delays with a renewed sense of urgency. In the main, these delays can be attributed to the appointed construction companies not adhering to their original contractual agreements; the process relating to the transfer of land; the revisions and amendment of the site development and subdivision plans; and the repairs of technical snags which impacted on the issuing of certificates of occupancy.

A scheduled handover of dwellings for the 108 claimants was earmarked to proceed from 24 June to 26 July 2021. This could not happen at the time due to COVID-19 regulations and adjusted level 4 restrictions. As the handover process was to resume in August 2021, some claimants lodged their

dissatisfaction with regard to the typology and quality of the completed 108 units.

As a result, these 108 dwellings have not been allocated to the eligible beneficiaries as the occupational certificates for the units remain outstanding. We have been advised that the City of Cape Town has already approved all building plans for row houses and it has one-year temporary occupancy certificates that have been issued for 31 units.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development will continue the discussions with the City of Cape Town on design items raised for the permanent occupancy certificates to be issued. It is anticipated that the City of Cape Town will issue the balance of temporary occupancy certificates before the end of this financial year, with full occupancy certificates expected by 1 May 2022.

Since there are more than 1 000 claimants that opted for dwellings, further development phases are still to be implemented. The construction of the remaining units, where all claimants will be accommodated, is anticipated to be carried out and completed in December 2024.

As the Inter-Ministerial Committee, IMC, on Land Reform and Agriculture, we are committed to ensuring that there are no further delays in the finalisation of the District Six project. We will ensure that various departments and spheres of government that are affected play their respective roles and seamlessly co-ordinate their work to avoid any further unnecessary delays in this project.

Within a short while, we will convene all the key role-players within government to agree on fast-tracking plans with shortened delivery timelines. These key role-players that I’m talking about include the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, the Land Claims Commission, the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements and the City of Cape Town. With dedicated focus and close project monitoring, we believe it is possible to deliver on this project within a shorter space of time.

Hon Speaker, in broad terms, government continues to be seized with the bigger responsibility to accelerate land reform to achieve restorative justice and social inclusion. While our land reform has encountered challenges and not performed to our satisfaction, there is no doubt that significant progress has been made in the restitution and redistribution of our

land to its rightful owners in a way that restores dignity and justice to those who were dispossessed of their land.

As at 30 September 2021, the restitution programme has, since its inception, settled 82 295 land claims, resulting in the awarding of 3,8 million hectares of land to beneficiaries at a cost of R24 billion. Furthermore, the programme has approved R18 billion in the settlement of claims involving financial compensation.

Since the inception of the land redistribution and tenure programme, government has acquired over five million hectares of land from over 5 500 projects, in the process benefitting

309 335 beneficiaries. The process of allocating

700 000 hectares of state-owned land for development is currently underway to benefit those who need access to land for productive use.

Furthermore, government has given a mandate to the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights to fast-track the settlement of old order land claims. To support this process, government will prioritise the resolution of administrative hurdles and challenges that are contributing to the slow pace of our land reform process. Among others, these include:

Firstly, the need to strengthen capacity and streamline our verification processes, which at times take longer than necessary;

Secondly, making provision for additional human resource capacity to deal with backlogs;

Thirdly, instituting effective processes for the resolution of disputes, including conflicts among beneficiary communities; and

Finally, dealing decisively with incidents of fraud and corruption whenever they are detected.

Notwithstanding progress made in fast-tracking the resolution of outstanding claims, the reality is that the current fiscal constraints are imposing serious limitations on our ability to move with the necessary speed.

The IMC on Land Reform and Agriculture will continue to seek solutions and monitor progress on the finalisation of outstanding claims in line with the standing directives by the Constitutional Court on new land claims. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Thank you very much, Speaker. It is always refreshing to listen to the responses of the Deputy President. Many communities have benefitted from land restitution and in getting dividends from mines and rental from shopping centres, sometimes under the leadership of the Deputy President.

Residents of District Six and their offspring have lost out on such benefits for 27 years. Will the remaining 40 hectares given to them by President Mandela to utilise for their benefit and not for the benefit of the City of Cape Town’s developers ... Can the President assure the nation that District Six will be a heritage site and a memorial site for the world to remind them of the harm of forced evictions? I also want to understand why the District Six development trust, led by Judge Desai, has been left out of future consultations. I hope that the Deputy President can respond to some of these questions.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker. We must really apologise to the people and the claimants of District Six.

Now, a number of challenges have been experienced. Some of the challenges emanate from the claimants themselves. Firstly, the claimants opted to be developers themselves. After phases one

and two they started quarreling amongst themselves and a decision was taken that, no, we are no longer going to allow the claimants to develop the houses. An independent contractor was appointed. Now, this contractor did not really go well with the claimants, and as we speak the number of defects that have been seen in the houses have made the claimants very unhappy. There is a stop and go, stop and go. Currently there is a group that has gone to court to force the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to recognise them. Now, the court will decide. However, in terms of managing the project going forward, we think we need to pull all the role-players together — there are too many — and agree on a plan; a timeline that will fast-track the completion of this project.

We must apologise to the claimants. This has taken too long. That is why we are going to come closer and work together with all the role-players involved to try and deliver this project to the claimants.

With regard to the declaration of the area as a heritage ... there are processes that should be followed and that should be applied for us to consider those declarations. I am sure that the respective owners will consider making those applications

to the relevant bodies, especially the Department of Arts and Culture ... should also be consulted in this regard.

Mr Z M D MANDELA: Thank you, hon Speaker. Last week the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development met to discuss the District Six land claims. The report received showed that the majority of land claims have been settled. However, the pending cases are those referred to as the new order land claims, ie those lodged in 2014. We know that the Land Claims Commission has been interdicted from processing all the new order claims until all the pre-1998 land claims have been settled.

Does the Deputy President believe that the Land Claims Commission is on track to ensure that all pre-1998 claims are settled? And furthermore, that the Land Claims Commission is well capacitated to bring all pre-1998 claims to finality?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. I think the hon member is correct in that we have been taken to court to consider claims that were made after a certain deadline. Well, I can say that we are on track in terms of finalising the old order claims, but we must say upfront that this matter will need a discussion with the President and the

Minister of Finance because it has taken too long to finalise these claims. I am citing the President and the Minister of Finance because in the main we are running short of the necessary financial resources to pursue these claims and to finalise them.

Of course, we have empowered the Land Claims Court to quickly process any disputes amongst claimants, which in the past has been a problem. We have also added the desired capacity to do the verification of these claims. So, we can now rest assured that the verification process is going to happen at the required speed, but we need the resources to pay the claims. That is what government should sit and discuss. We are going to put it at the door of our President and the Minister of Finance as it’s a matter that will require a political decision because we know that some of the people who had made claims have already died. It’s now a matter that must be finalised with immediate effect.

Ms T M MBABAMA: Mbabama, thank you, Madam Speaker.

*IsiXhosa*:

Sekela Mongameli ...

*English*:

... the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights should by now, to all intents and purposes, be an autonomous entity with its own budget. Why is government dragging its feet in achieving this, as this is one of the factors that impacts directly on the delay in resolving the outstanding land claims?

*IsiXhosa*:

Ndiyabulela.

*English*:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker and thanks hon member. I don’t think that will make any difference because, whether you’re an independent body there or whether you are within a department, the money that is allocated to you will depend on the competing priorities that a country faces.

In our case for instance, we have a number of competing priorities. You will understand that all of us want to get our learners to attend tertiary education ... and we want to make it free, and every year, year in and year out, we battle to try and satisfy that priority. That is just one priority but there are many.

So, it’s not really a question of creating more and more structures. That can probably also be too costly. However, it’s the question of the availability of resources which will always outstrip the resources that we have. The needs that we have will always outstrip the resources that are available.

So with this ... that is why I’m saying we are going to put it

on the agenda of government so that gradually ... a bit faster

... we try to augment the current budget so that we move a bit faster in settling these claims. People have been waiting for too long.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Thank you very much, Speaker. Deputy President, by the end of the 1998 cut-off date for lodging restitution claims, over 79 000 land claims were lodged with the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights by people who had been forcibly removed from their land by the apartheid regime. In 2014, the government reopened the land claims process until it was stopped by the Constitutional Court, which ruled that the 1998 claims must all be settled first.

To date your government has still not settled the 1998 land claims, meaning that the 2014 land claims cannot be touched. How much has this issue of compensating current landowners of

the land delayed the finalisation of land restitution claims? How does your government plan to deal with this problem, since the ruling party rejected our proposals for the expropriation of land without compensation?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy President, there is a change of guard behind you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes, I can hear, I can hear, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please go ahead, sir.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well, I don’t think we should go back to that process that has just happened. It’s water under the bridge. We must focus on what is available, going forward.

There are many options available to government to pursue land reform but of course at the centre of these various models and alternatives is the availability of resources, because we must increase the people that do the verification. Under one name alone you will find that you’ve got 50 or 60 claimants that you must verify and say, no, you are not the rightful

claimant; this is the rightful claimant. And you must provide evidence. Beyond that, one of the 50 or 60 claimants can take you to the Land Claims Court; a process that can also take its time.

Now, there are many processes that takes time in the process of validating a claim. We are trying by all means to put in new mechanisms that would allow us to move faster. I think on that score we have done very well as the Land Claims Commission to try and remove all stops. The remaining challenge is the availability of resources to settle those claims.

Of course you would be aware that the Expropriation Bill is currently on its way to Parliament. That is one option that would be available for government to utilise in order to fast- track land reform.

Question 17:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, the National Development Plan, NDP, sets out a broad vision of eliminating poverty and reducing inequality by 2030. It also identifies agriculture as a critical sector in economic development,

which can contribute significantly to reducing unemployment, and improving household food security.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development continues to provide support to beneficiaries who were allocated state farms as determined through the Beneficiary Selection Policy.

As part of our integrated farmer support programme, Government has prioritised the provision of a package of post-settlement support that includes training as well as financial and technical support to ensure that all allocated land is productively utilised.

During the period 2019-20 to 2021-22 financial year the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has provided support to 191 Proactive Land Acquisition farms across the nine provinces.

The major focus of support is on farm agricultural infrastructure, production inputs, mechanization as well as training and mentorship to ensure that the allocated farms are productively utilised. Business and entrepreneurship training is also provided on an ongoing basis.

The skills audit was conducted in 275 farms located in the North-West, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, and Gauteng provinces to determine skills gaps and design appropriate training interventions; 166 beneficiaries from 66 farms have since received requisite training.

Alongside these interventions, the COVID-19 Agricultural Disaster Fund to the tune of R1,2 billion was established by the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development in 2020 to ensure sustainable food production post the pandemic.

Whilst the current response packages to support farmers do not specifically include the provision of renewable energy, the agricultural sector is not excluded in the recent intervention which allows for the generation of electricity by the private sector or a municipality of up to 100 megawatts without a requirement of a generation licence.

However, the reliability of electricity supply to small and emerging farmers should be explored when farm assessments are conducted so that alternative and workable technologies for farm support are identified and tested.

As Government we will continue to explore a wide variety of green energy solutions for the agricultural sector, and further engage Eskom to work with emerging farmers to diversify their power generation opportunities to include solar and wind energy.

We accept that smallholder agricultural growth, will not be achieved without access to support services, including addressing the challenges caused by instability in electricity supply.

Increasing agricultural productivity requires us to address all accompanying challenges in a collaborative manner, thereby creating long term food security, job opportunities and sustainable income. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Ms M M E TLHAPE: Hon Deputy Speaker, the response by Deputy President indicates numerous government support programmes targeted at subsistence, smallholder and emerging farmers, which we believe are very crucial in fighting household poverty and household food insecurity. We really appreciate these interventions.

Hon Deputy President, The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has been allocated R1 billion Presidential Stimulus Package. What was the intention of this package and how will it also alleviate other pressures within the agricultural sector? I thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, the amount

R1 billion - like I said - was allocated to small-scale farmers whose productions have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have counted the small-scale farmers that benefited from this R1,2 billion to be 75 000.

Through the same programme, subsistence producers were supported with input vouchers to retain self-employment in the sector while supporting food value chain.

Further intervention under the second phase of the Presidential Stimulus Package are targeting 50 000 subsistence producers. Out of this 50 000 we are targeting 50% women, 40% youth and 10% people with disabilities, also to benefit from this amount of money.

Part of the money was utilised to do an assessment per province of 654 farms ready to be allocated to small-scale

farmers. That assignment has been concluded. We now know how much support must be given to each farm and to each beneficiary in each of the nine provinces in the country.

Thank you very much.

Ms A STEYN: Deputy President, it’s not the first time that we are meeting regarding this land reform issue. I’ve just been to Solms-Delta farm; that is a wine farm here in the Western Cape area. The farm has been allocated to farm workers in a joint venture programme by the government. These workers have not been paid for four months, their electricity has been cut.

Deputy President, it’s sound like your programme is a box- ticking exercise.

Can you tell me how and when will the Inter-Ministerial Committee make their minutes available so that we can see what real empowerment will come to the beneficiaries of land reform? Thank you, Deputy Speaker. [Applause.] [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon member, you are mentioning a specific farm where farming has been disrupted and workers are no longer working, electricity has been cut. I would like to

get details of that farm so that we respond appropriately. Is it possible to get the details of the farm? Because this support package was meant to support every farmer that is under duress, under trouble, troubled by the COVID-19; so, probably if we sit and discuss with the farm owners we can establish whether they deserve support from government. [Interjections.] Yes, I’m partnering with the farmer.

We would be able to establish exactly whether they’ve partners with the provincial government or the national government ... [Interjections.]

HON MEMBERS: National, national.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: ... oh, good. You seem to be knowing this problem, all of you. [Laughter.] So, you must give me the information so that I can help in this regard. Thank you very much.

Mr N SINGH: Deputy President, we’ve been talking about

COVID-19 and the devastating impact it’s had on all sectors of society, more especially on the agricultural sector and you’ve spoken about the package, the billions of rands package, to assist those farmers that were impacted by covid.

But there is also another problem that farmers are facing currently and that is ever increasing fuel costs; ballooning, thanks to fuel levies, including the general fuel levy and the Road Accident Fund levy. These burdens will directly impact employment and start-up farmers.

My question, hon Deputy President, is: How will government ensure growth, in accordance to the National Development Plan, NDP, given these constraints and what will government do to ameliorate these rising input costs, especially of fuel? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, well, without interfering with those who are regulating the prices of our fuel, but as government we have the responsibility to support some sectors of our economy.

You will understand that with regard to agriculture, generally, as government all our programmes are a grant. The money we allocate to provinces it’s a grant that must be given to farmers. Nationally we give farmers a grant but we also allow a facility for them to borrow money, in addition to the grant that we give.

There won’t be farmers that can succeed without the support of

government.

As we speak, the money that we are talking about, we’ve given it to farmers and we’ve gone around ... yes, there might be farmers that are left behind and this programme will continue. There are farmers that were hit by drought. I visited those farms and after our visit we’ve supported those farmers. We have even made land available for them to plant their losen and we’ve assisted them to plant.

So, I’m saying, farmers won’t survive without the support of

government.

As much as there’s high fuel costs, this side we’re subsidising farmers to produce. Otherwise they won’t be able to produce. Thank you very much.

*Afrikaans*:

Ms T BREEDT: Dankie, Agb Adjunkspeaker.

*English*:

Deputy President, one of the biggest challenges facing the beneficiaries of land reform is that they, in many instances,

do not hold title deeds to the land. This makes it impossible for them to secure financing as they can’t provide land as security.

Will the Inter-Ministerial Committee consider transferring title deeds as part as actual agricultural development? I thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Deputy Speaker, well, there are farmers that are currently occupying land and we have assessed those land parcels. Where farmers are entitled, they’ve been renting that piece of land for years, some were not even paying for those pieces of land where they are farming.

It is our wish as government to formalise our relationship with those farmers. Firstly, we allow these farmers to lease, give them a period that is reasonable for them to improve the farm. They can go borrow money, for instance, you give a farmer 50 years on the land, but they lease the farm with an option to buy it.

In certain instances, if we realise that the farmer is unable to buy the land we release this land to the farmer. There are farmers that agreed to buy certain pieces of land from

government at a certain agreed price and we’ve allowed those

farmers to buy those pieces of land.

Our intention is to ensure that farmers are secured, their investment is secured, they can go out there and borrow money because they have security in the land that they are producing.

So, we want to ensure that those who were dispossessed of land they get their land back, those who want to farm they get land to farm and assisted by government through a lease or through direct transfer of the land to these farmers. There are many options available in our land reform programme.

Like I’ve said in the beginning when I answered, our distribution programme far outsmarts our restitution programme. That means land that we have bought as government deliberately and redistributed to farmers, people who want to farm, that is almost accounting to 5 million hectares, that was delivered through redistribution; 3,8 hectares was delivered through restitution. And I don’t count the number of hectares that was distributed for the sake of human settlement and for the sake of industrialization, all our industrial parks. The land where these industrial parks are developed has

been released by government, for those parks. Thank you very much.

Question 18:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Deputy Speaker, during the sitting of the Southern African Development Community, SADC, Extra-Ordinary Organ Troika Summit of Heads of State and Governments, which was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 19 May 2020, the government of Mozambique requested assistance and support from the SADC member states to fight the insurgency in northern Mozambique.

Of course the insurgency in neighbouring Mozambique continues to pose a threat to stability and security in our region, and measures to contain and prevent any potential social, economic and humanitarian crisis is paramount.

It is against this backdrop that our government took a decision to support Mozambique to contain and subdue this insurgents, and further provide capacity in terms of training, military intelligence, reconnaissance and equipment. As a member of SADC our government continues to play a key role towards the realisation of peace and stability in the region. In this regard, South Africa was amongst the SADC member

states who pledged support on military personnel and equipment for the SADC Mission that was deployed to Mozambique on 15 July 2021.

The mandate of this SADC Mission in Mozambique is to assist our neighbour to combat acts of violent extremism by neutralising the threat such extremism poses in Mozambique and in the region. The end result being to restore peace and security, and create a conducive environment for investment that will drive economic growth of Mozambique.

South Africa assumed the chairship of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation in August 2021, and have prioritised the promotion and co-ordination of peace and security in the region for the duration of our term.

Given the nature and intensity of this insurgency, we cannot ignore the possibility of it spilling to neighbouring states, especially those bordering Mozambique. Therefore, active engagements and provision of support to Mozambique is necessary to prevent destabilisation, displacement of people and a humanitarian crisis.

Our view is that security risks and possible economic challenges for SADC countries due to forced migration far outweigh the fear of reprisals from these insurgents.

Therefore, our involvement in the stabilisation efforts in Cabo Delgado is in the country’s national interest.

As SADC member states, we need adequate early warning system that is enhanced through strengthening of regional co- operation and sharing of information and intelligence to prevent future insurgencies.

Hon deputy Speaker, we remain committed to a conflict-free Mozambique that will ensure peace, security and stability in the region. Thank you very much.

*Sepedi*:

Mna A M SEABI: Motlatṧasepikara ...

*English:*

... Thank you very much, hon Deputy President, for your answer. Like you said, the South African government is committed to play a pivotal role in building a better Africa, contributing to a better world. In line with this commitment, the South African government continue to play a role in peace-

making efforts through peaceful interventions in an endeavour to bring stability in the region and promotion of democracy.

Therefore, Deputy President, in your view what possible intervention mechanisms can further be explored by SADC to strengthen regional intervention in conflict resolutions as an effort to bring everlasting stability in the region? I thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, SADC has, at its own disposal, a number of instruments that it can use to facilitate interventions which are guided by the SADC Treaty of 1992, the SADC Protocol on Politics Defence and Security of 2001, which we are currently chairing, and the SADC Community Agenda as amended in 2009 to facilitate dialogue amongst warring parties and ensure economic people to people integration is realised in the region.

The few instruments that I have mentioned are available to SADC and its member states. In this case as a country we are using the Protocol on Politics Defence and Security, which we are chairing, and we have agreed that we are going to share intelligence information, deploy military personnel — boots on the ground, people should be there physically to fight. In our

case we have deployed more than 1 400 soldiers which the President has agreed to deploy.

So, at this particular point in time, we feel that this intervention is enough. Of course we are putting our ears on the ground so that whatever changes that might occur in the situation in Cabo Delgado we are ready to give additional support to our neighbours. Thank you very much.

Mr D BERGMAN: Deputy President, given the state of Mozambique currently, and given that two MPs are sitting imprisoned in Eswatini with another MP on the run for fear of his life, whilst the government in the DRC and the old regime holding military power in the east are in a dangerous tug of war. And lastly, given our high rates of murder and violent crimes, I will put it to you that terrorists don’t actually need to come to the SADC countries at this stage as we seem to be doing a good enough job for them. But what I would ask you, sir, is whether our friendship with Russia, Iran, Qatar and China will actually benefit us in neutralising any threats if they were to actually activate within South Africa? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. We have not explored that. Remember we are a continent our self and we

have our own structures in the continent. Before we can think of other people to help us, we must help ourselves. So, the continent is ready made to deal with its own conflict. Yes, we have challenges in Ethiopia, DRC, there and there, but we must leave it to the AU to deal with its own problems.

I am proud to say that as South Africa we have chaired the AU and our President did very well at the time of the COVID-19. We have set up structures in the continent that are currently dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and they are effective. So, I believe in the AU. We must believe in our self, and we must improve our capacity on a day to day basis. We cannot always cry and think other people can help us; we must, on a day to day, develop our own capacities in our different countries.

I am happy that I am seeing more and more integration, more leaders in the continent coming together, and I am very happy about the current step that has been taken by the President to visit these four nations which is an indication that as a country we are willing to work together with our African countries, foster this relationship and build our capacities together.

The message that I have heard from the President is that Africa must develop its own pharmaceutical capacity, its own vaccines, and it is a project that I think will materialise in our lifetime. Thank you very much.

Ms E N NTLANGWINI: Deputy Speaker, to the Deputy President, the unrest in Mozambique and in Swaziland threaten the stability of the region. The clownish conduct of the regime in Zimbabwe also does not help in strengthening the governance in the region. The general perception is that the region and the continent as a whole is ruleless because of lack of visionary pan Africanist leadership. In light of these problems faced by the region and the continent, why has South Africa retreated from providing leadership in resolving the problems of the continent? If you claim you have not retreated, why have you allowed the people of Swaziland to suffer under King Mswati? I thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, we have not retreated. You will understand that South Africa is part of this multilateral organisations and we respect those because we believe in their effectiveness. Our contribution in the continent is to work together with these African states, not to impose our wisdom on them, but to work together to resolve

our problems. I think we are succeeding. Most of the problems that we see in the continent are caused by tribalism which is something that we must defeat. At times I see also in the country some elements of tribalism starting to rear their ugly heads. We have long defeated tribalism and we are a symbol of inspiration in the continent in how best we can deal with tribalism.

With regards to racism we are still found wanting, and I think working together as a country we can still remain a good shining example for the continent. But the message I want to convey is that for the AU to succeed we must respect all the structures that the AU has put in place because if we do not respect them then no one will respect them. Otherwise, we better call it a day as the continent. This is a continent that must succeed and we must help this continent to succeed because finally we are the beneficiaries ourselves. Thank you very much.

Mr M HLENGWA: Hon Deputy Speaker, to the hon Deputy President, the festival of the deputies. Hon Deputy President, you refer to the AU. Agenda 2063 speaks about silencing the guns 2020 was the theme. Instead of us making progress we are not actually moving into that direction which says to us that we

can be confident that these things will be achieved. We are speaking about porous borders and heightened risks to South Africa because of the prevailing conflicts in the region and on the continent. Broder to home then, Mr Deputy President, over the MTEF there is a 14% reduction in the defence budget, and in 2022-23 the SANDF will save about R1,1 billion on personal costs. Now, with regional deployment of SANDF in SADC region, forming part of the country’s peace-keeping mission, how will these cuts and budgetary constraints affect South Africa’s participation in maintaining peace and stability in the region, and also securing South Africa’s own safety? I thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, I can agree with the assertion that the budget of our security institutions has reduced quite correctly because we are faced with a situation. We are faced with a pandemic and you will agree with me that we diverted a lot of money to try and deal with this pandemic. In the process, our economy was disrupted. The amount of revenue that we use to collect yesterday we are collecting it today. So, definitely we need to cut our coat according to our size. Our children must continue to go to school, we must continue to get water and to do all the necessary services to

our people, but still honour our obligation in the region and in the continent. We have tried very hard.

Our President, as chair of the AU, tried very hard to give the necessary support to the structures of the AU and looking back it was quite a success.

Currently we are speaking about Mozambique, and we have deployed personnel there. We have deployed our equipment, and it is not only us that must deploy those personnel and equipment but we have other sister countries like Botswana, Mozambique, Angola, you can count. Up to so far, the mission is going well in Mozambique, and that is why you can hear that there is stability that is coming back, peace is coming back and our soldiers are able to win that battle. So, yes, there are a lot of gaps that are there financially, we are not winning the war of silencing the guns in the continent, at times when we take two steps forward we come back three steps back.

Remember that we reported to you that we succeeded to get South Sudan to proceed and form a government. Today South Sudan has a government, but as we look at South Sudan, Sudan starts, Uganda starts, Ethiopia starts. When I was dealing

with the South Sudan matter, we used to convene in Ethiopia and it was fine, everything was good. But just after that the war erupted, and I am sure the Au is dealing with that matter. All the matters that you have sighted the Au is dealing with those matters. Remember, as a country we make our own contribution financially into the structures of the AU and we do that without fail. We have our own commitments in the country here, but what is due to the continent we pay without fail. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy President. That concludes questions to the Deputy President. Thank you, sir, we appreciate that. Hon members, that concludes the plenary session for the day and the House is adjourned. Thank you.

The House adjourned at 16:13.