**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY**

**MINI PLENARIES (VIRTUAL)**

**10:00 – 12:15**

1. **Budget Vote 9: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation**

**[Hon M Nxumalo]**

**Honourable Speaker / Chairperson**

The hopes and dreams held by most South Africans in 1994 largely remain unfulfilled. The promises of socio-economic transformation that came with democracy have left the majority disappointed, hopeless and marginalised. Yet, the country has moved from one development blueprint to the next, indicating that our problem is not necessarily a lack of planning but rather, a case of poor implementation. While we have sailed from the RDP, GEAR, ASGISA, NGP, and finally to the NDP, what is clear is that there is poor implementation, worsened by a general lack of capacity to deliver on ambitious promises made in every election year.

We acknowledge the functions of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) to facilitate, influence and support effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of government programmes aimed at improving service delivery, outcomes and the impact on society. As laudable as this sounds, we believe that part of this mandate includes an understanding of the capacity of the state to deliver on promised goods and services. We find the Department lacking in this regard.

The IFP notes with dismay the continued use of the bucket toilet system in South Africa, 27 years after the end of apartheid. We are aware of the existence of thousands of households using this inhuman system, which not only strips people of their dignity but continues to be a health risk. According to recent numbers from Statistics South Africa, more than 40 000 households were still using this system in 2019. We do acknowledge that there has been a decline in the number of households that were using this toilet system over the years, yet this number remains unacceptable. The continued existence of such facilities is a disgrace to our nation.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a further threat to service delivery that is likely to derail the NDP targets. The pandemic, however, is rocking a ship that was already sailing in troubled waters. The fiscal crisis at different levels of the government and within various SOEs partly contributed to the failure to deliver services. Poverty, inequality and unemployment remain big challenges and without proper implementation of existing policies, these are set to increase.

There is no better time than the present to deliver services to South Africans and deal with the triple threat of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The pandemic has negatively affected people’s livelihoods and has worsened already existing problems. We are a country in a crisis.

In conclusion, the IFP, as in previous years, is of the view that the DPME needs to rethink and redress its implementation strategies.

The IFP supports the Budget Vote.

**MINI PLENARIES (VIRTUAL)**

**14:00 – 16:15**

1. **Budget Vote 20: Women, Youth & Persons with Disabilities**

**[Hon. MD Hlengwa]**

Honourable Speaker,

Living in South Africa, we are reminded daily of the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) faced by children, women and members of the LGBTQI+ community. We are only in the second quarter of 2021 and far too many families have buried their loved ones due to GBVF. This Department has been tasked with a monumental mission – to initiate and lead the “socioeconomic transformation and implementation of the empowerment and participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities through mainstreaming, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation.” It is an important and critical task, which demands all the support that government can offer, financial and otherwise.

The IFP is mindful of the economic climate and the immense strain that has been placed on the public purse, especially by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we need to ensure that every precaution is taken to limit waste and that accountability is enforced. Once again, the IFP wishes to note how this Department mismanages its finances, even during a financial crisis, in a way that is detrimental to those it is tasked with supporting.

The Department has been, on numerous occasions, urged by the Portfolio Committee to avoid, or completely stop using consultants, due to its limited budget. Consultants invariably cost more and stretch already limited finances. Yet recommendations on how to remedy this problem seem to have fallen on deaf ears.  The IFP wishes to reiterate the importance of fiscal prudence, especially when such an important mandate is at risk.

The IFP is concerned that the website of the Department has not been working for months. How can we expect members of the public, and possibly those desperate for information and help, to be assisted when the website is down? This a miscarriage of justice and another example of misplaced financial focus.

The IFP continues to support the work of this Department and the agencies that execute its mandate. In this regard, the IFP calls for better accountability and smarter personnel decisions that will not compromise the integrity of the Department. A constitutional imperative so critical as the rights of young people, women, children and persons with disabilities, who form part of our most vulnerable, must be taken seriously.

Finally, the IFP recognises that budget cuts have taken place across the board. However, in a time where the safety and security of women, children and members of the LGBTQI+ community is making front page news daily, a financial commitment from government is a step in the right direction to show that we are taking this issue seriously.

The IFP supports the Budget.

I thank you.

1. **Budget Vote 5: Home Affairs**

**[Hon. LL van der Merwe]**

Chairperson -

Imagine waking up at 4am, using your last bit of money on transport to your local Home Affairs office, hoping that **today** you will be able to get an identity document. Because that ID is what stands between you and a job. It stands between you and providing for your family. It stands between you and a brighter future.

Then consider the mother who travels to Home Affairs in search of a birth certificate. That document stands between her and a SASSA grant, without which she cannot feed her newborn baby.

But for many visiting a Home Affairs office means taking a day off work, **only** to queue for hours on end, and then to be told to come back tomorrow, because the systems are offline again.

Systems that are perpetually offline have become synonymous with this Department. **This** despite a Task Team having been set up to resolve system downtime. But little to no progress has been made.

It is therefore baffling that Home Affairs still has no appointment system. More so that its services have not been rolled out at **all** banks; banks which are eager to assist.

Chairperson, **this** is simply a dysfunctional department. Call center calls and emails go unanswered.

Our borders are open to anyone willing to cross a river, or pay a syndicate.

Lawyers for Human Rights estimates that according to stats they have from the World Bank, South Africa is home to 15 million undocumented migrants. If that is indeed true, it poses a massive risk to the State, yet this Department has **zero**plan to address this crisis.

Then, our asylum seeker system has been abused to the point where economic migrants from all over the world have set up businesses – wiping out the spaza shops that once supported many South African families. Yet on this issue, Home Affairs simply passes the buck to Small Business Development, which passes it straight back to Home Affairs, and ultimately on to municipalities.

While lawlessness flourishes Chairperson, our Ministers simply look the other way. Then, our Minister is on record saying that his Department has not lost the war against corruption. Yet we know that corruption is eating away at the heart and credibility of this Department. Some will tell you with pride how they only need to save a few Rands to buy a South African document.

**This** is a crime against the South African State and its people. But it is not clear whether a single official is doing hard time in jail for selling our documents.

Now six months since the Bushiris’ great escape, we still don’t know which government official aided and abetted them.

While lawlessness flourishes Chairperson, our Ministers simply look the other way.

The much-lauded Border Management Authority – supposedly the panacea to our border management problems – has not been fully operationalized, because it is still not clear where the funds will come from.

What we **do** know, through a Cabinet Task Team co-chaired by the Ministers of Labour and Home Affairs, is that some sectors in our economy employ mostly, if not only, foreign nationals. This at a time when more than 30% of South Africans and 50% of our youth are unemployed.

In mines, in restaurants, and in the trucking industry and elsewhere, South Africans are overlooked for job opportunities. Yet instead of fixing this our Government responds by calling on Cuban nationals to take up engineering posts, while South African engineers sit at home. This Department is presiding over a full-scale immigration management crisis.

Chairperson, the Electoral Commission, continues to do great work. We wish them well for the upcoming elections. The IFP pledges its support to ensure free and fair elections. We will do our part for voter education and youth participation in the coming Local Government Elections.

For as long as this Department fails to implement its own laws; for as long as it relegates South Africans to unemployment lines, and SASSA queues; and for as long as no efforts are made to correct all this; we cannot support this budget vote.

I thank you.