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***PROCEEDINGS OF THE MINI-PLENARY SESSION – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY***

***CHAMBER***

\_\_\_\_

Members of the mini-plenary session met on the virtual

platform at 16:29.

Acting Chairperson Mr F D Xasa took the Chair and requested

members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or

meditation.

The Chairperson announced that the virtual mini-plenary

sitting constituted a meeting of the National Assembly.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Thank you. Hon members,

before we proceed, I would like to remind you that the virtual

mini-plenary is deemed to be in the precinct of Parliament and

thus constitutes a meeting of the National Assembly for

debating purposes only. In addition to the Rules of virtual

sittings, the Rules of the National Assembly including the



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Rules of debate apply. Members enjoy the same powers and

privileges that apply in a sitting of the National Assembly.

Members should equally note that anything said on the platform

is deemed to have been said in the House and may be ruled

upon.

All members who have logged in shall be considered to be

present and are requested to mute their microphones and only

unmute it when recognised to speak. This is because the mics

are very sensitive and will pick up any noise which might

disturb the attention of other members. When recognised to

speak, please unmute your microphone and connect your video.

Members may also make use of the icons on the bar at the

bottom of their screens which has the option that allows a

member to put up his or her hand to raise points of order.

The secretariat will assist by alerting the Chairperson about

members requesting to speak. When using the virtual system,

members are urged to refrain or desist from unnecessary points

of order or interjections. We shall now proceed to the Order,

which is a debate on Vote No 30: Communications, and Digital

Technologies Appropriation Bill. I will now recognise the

Minister of Communications, and Digital Technologies.



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**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Debate on Vote No 30 – Communications and Digital

Technologies:

The MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: Hon

House Chairperson, hon Deputy Minister of Communications and

Digital Technologies, Mr Philly Mapulane, chairperson of the

Portfolio Committee on Communications, Mr Boyce Maneli and hon

members, members of the portfolio committee, hon Members of

Parliament, the Acting Director-General of the Department of

Communications and Digital Technologies, deputy directors-

general, and other officials of the department, leadership and

management of the state-owned entities within the portfolio of

Communications and Digital Technologies, and leadership of the

information and communications technology, ICT, sector in our

country, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

This 2022-23 Budget Vote takes place a day after the World

Telecommunication and Information Society Day, WTISD. The

World Telecommunication Day has been celebrated annually every

17th May since 1969, to mark the founding of International

Telecommunications Union, ITU, and the signing of the first



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International Telegraph Convention in 1865. The main objective

of the day was to raise global awareness of social changes

brought about by the internet and new technologies and the

reduction of the digital divide.

In addition, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

acknowledges that the spread of information and communication

technology and global interconnectivity has great potential to

accelerate human development and bridging the digital divide

to an end.

As a country, we aspire to have all South Africans to be

connected through cost effective solutions that are also

enablers of other sectors and business growth. We live in an

era that demands that we create efficient and reliable

telecommunications capacity to enable human to human, human-

machine and machine-machine communications capacity.

This Budget Vote outlines the work the Department of

Communications and Digital Technologies and its entities will

undertake to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive

digital economy. The total Budget for the department – Budget

Vote 30 is R2,7 billion. Eleven percent or R302 million of the



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Budget is compensation of employees; 16% of that is for goods

and services, which is R440 million; 72% of the budget is

transfers and subsidies.

With regard to transfers to entities, Independent

Communications Authority of SA, Icasa, receives a transfer of

just over R760 million; the Films and Publication Board

receives over R102 million; the National Electronics Media

Institute of SA receives R102 million; Universal Service and

Access Agency of SA receives R86 million; and Universal

Service; Access Fund receives R66 million; the SA Broadcasting

Corporation, SABC, for the Channel Africa receives

R66 million; the public broadcaster receives R133 million; and

the SABC Programme Productions receives R15 million; the SA

Post Office will receive R519 million. There is no provision

for Sentech for both the migration of digital signals and dual

illumination costs relating to the entire digital migration

programme.

With regard to goods and services budget for the

infrastructure projects, we have allocated SA Connect

R239,08 million, for Broadcast Digital Migration that we are

completing, we have allocated R88,7 million. The remainder of



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the goods and services budget becomes R111 million. Phase Two

of the SA Connect will be funded through the Infrastructure

Fund for the first year of this year and the allocations for

the next outer years will be provided for from the national

fiscus through the National Treasury.

With regard to the Broadcast Digital Migration, the budget

does not make transfer provisions to Sentech for the migration

of digital signals and dual illumination costs relating to the

digital migration because we have achieved 100% digital

network coverage and satisfied all Broadcast Digital Migration

policy conditions and regulatory requirements that warrant the

end of dual illumination period.

The Broadcast Digital Migration process is a critical digital

transformations step that redefines the ICT path for South

Africa. We are happy to update that we are working towards

concluding the analogue switch-off by the 30th of June 2022,

and this is after the Gauteng High Court ruled in support of

the conclusion of the programme but extended time for the

Minister to complete the installation of set-top boxes for

qualifying households who applied for government support by

the 31st `October 2021. In addition to the 100% digital



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network coverage in South Africa, the BDM programme has also

achieved the following critical milestones: Firstly, we have

switched off 100% or 84% of analogue sites of M-Net, 52% or

163 sites out of the 314 of the SABC, and 9% or 8 sites of

e.tv out of 93; secondly, we have concluded analogue switch-

off in five provinces being Free State, Northern Cape, North

West, Mpumalanga and Limpopo; thirdly, in the five provinces

where analogue has been switched-off, we have concluded

rearranging spectrum or restacking thereby giving way for the

spectrum to be assigned for future technologies and by Icasa

to the mobile operators as from 1st July 2022, in line with

the outcomes of the recent spectrum auction; fourthly, set-top

boxes installations are currently underway in all nine

provinces. By end of May, we aim to complete the installations

of set-top boxes in additional three provinces for the 507 251

targeted households being installed by end of June, as we have

already completed installations of the set-top boxes in the

provinces of Gauteng and Northern Cape; fifthly, we have also

commenced with the installations of set-top boxes that were

targeted to be completed by end of September in Gauteng and we

are planning to complete the installations of the September

2022 targeted 260 000 set-top boxes way before the end of

September; and lastly, to compliment the work of my colleague,



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the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition on the

directives to prohibit the importation and distribution of

analogue TV sets in South Africa, we will gazette a framework

for Integrated Digital Television sets, IDTVs, and set-top

boxes to qualify to carry the GoDigital logo in a quest to

protect South Africans to identify correct digital TVs in the

retail market.

The Analogue Switch-Off Programme is supporting more than 987

installer companies and has created more than 14 800 jobs for

locals, predominantly young installers.

On the spectrum auction, the completion of analogue switch-off

by 30 June 2022 is of national importance because the

communications regulator, Icasa, has successfully completed

the auction for the high demand spectrum and committed to the

licensees that they will have access to the relevant spectrum

from 1 July 2022. Icasa concluded the high frequency

communication spectrum auction in March 2022 as per the target

set by President Ramaphosa in his 2022 state of the nation

address. I congratulate Icasa on reaching this significant

milestone in our country.



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The 1st of July 2022 date for the availability of the high

demand spectrum to the licensees is also important for the

National Treasury or national fiscus to have access to the

much-needed R14,4 billion that was raised during the spectrum

auction.

The release of the high demand spectrum will improve the

ability of mobile telecommunications operators to build robust

telecommunications with better penetration and reach as we

chase our goal of ensuring that all South Africans have access

to the internet by 2024. To this end, the mobile

telecommunications operators are starting to upgrade the

telecommunications networks and to build robust 5G

telecommunication networks. In the immediate, through Icasa,

we have installed social obligations that will see the

telecommunications operators connecting 18 520 schools, 5 731

clinics and hospitals, 8 241 traditional authority offices,

949 libraries and Thusong Service Centres over the next 36

months. The department working with Icasa will monitor the

progress on the connection of these sites.

Furthermore, the availability of spectrum must also result in

the reduction of the cost of communication. We will



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progressively work on policy instruments to drive the

reduction of cost to communicate in South Africa including the

classification of data as a new basic utility at the same

level as water and electricity. The importance of data is

because it has become the enabler of innovation and wealth

creation for any country. In this regard, we will publish for

public comment a revised spectrum policy no later than July

2022. The draft policy will include proposals of spectrum for

Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises, SMMEs, and network and

data services in a manner that drives meaningful SMME

participation in the telecommunications sector, amongst

others. In the meantime, Icasa is undertaking a market study

on the call termination review. The outcome of this market

study will have a determining factor in the reduction of the

average data prices.

On SA Connect, to reach the end goal of a truly digital South

Africa with full digital inclusion of all its people, emphasis

must be placed on the digital government, digital economy,

digital industry and data sovereignty. The most fundamental

requirement for a digital South Africa is access to

connectivity or broadband networks by all, irrespective of

geographic location and economic standing. To ensure access to



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broadband connectivity by all, Cabinet approved revised model

and implementation plan for the SA Connect Phase 2 programme

that will ensure South Africa achieves a goal of universal

access to internet by all 2024.

In terms of the revised SA Connect model, Sentech and

Broadband InfraCo, BBI, working with the SMMEs that are Access

Network Service Providers, Internet Service Providers and

Mobile Virtual Network Operators will roll out 33 539

community Wi-Fi hotspots to cater for 5 830 208 households

over a 3-year period. The partnership with SMMEs in the

telecommunications sector is part of government’s commitment

to the transformation of the telecommunications industry by

supporting emerging telecommunications players. The SA Connect

drive will expand from the core network owned BBI, other

state-owned entities and telecommunications infrastructure

operators as well as the satellite service of Sentech in line

with our open access network policy.

The SA Connect project is estimated to provide opportunities

to approximately 120 SMMEs for core network build, and create

employment opportunities of more than 3 700 people, both

skilled professionals and semiskilled labour force. The



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implementation has commenced in the Eastern Cape and Northern

Cape with work to connect 412 sites in both provinces. The

National Treasury is in the process of finalizing mechanisms

for availing additional funds to roll out to the other

provinces in the 2022-23 financial year, as provisions have

already been made for the outer years.

Similarly, State Information Technology Agency, Sita, in line

with its legislated mandate will provide and maintain

connectivity to 15 691 government sites over the next 3 years,

with 4 706 targeted for the current financial year. The

funding for connecting government sites is provided for in the

ICT budgets of respective government departments including

provincial governments.

To enhance our broadband connectivity reach and in line with

the 2016 Cabinet decision, South Africa is now ready to launch

its our own communications satellite through Sentech in

partnership with the National Space Agency and all other key

stakeholders. The communications satellite will address both

media and broadband connectivity objectives and will entrench

our technology and data sovereignty. This will reduce

satellite capacity leasing costs, not only for government but



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other industries reliant on communication satellite technology

for their businesses and improve information security for our

country.

Digitization of broadcasting - the completion of the broadcast

digital migration further gives us an opportunity to trigger

growth of the broadcasting and entertainment sector, commonly

known as the creatives industry through the licensing of new

broadcasters and creating platforms of the future to deliver

content to South Africans.

In this regard, Sentech is developing a Cloud-based Hybrid

Streaming Platform for content distribution which will be

available by no later than the 3rd quarter of this financial

year. This platform will support distribution of content

through broadband, satellite, and terrestrial distribution

networks. The platform will enable access to commercial,

community and public broadcasting services to both radio and

TV channels and has the capability to provide information to

the public as and when required. Access to the platform will

also support mobile applications for both iOS, Android and

Harmony devices. Furthermore, the Deputy Minister will



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announce a programme by National Electronic Media Institute of

South Africa, Nemisa, to support emerging content producers.

During the Sona debate earlier this year, I announced that we

are going to issue policy directives for the availability of

additional multiplexes for both DTT and DTH in order to avail

additional TV channels, and with the capacity for 102 TV

channels by 2025, to boost the growth of the creatives

industry. Engagements with the SABC are underway about

additional channels it requires to support its competitiveness

and profitability, and with community broadcasters and other

emerging and new broadcasters to utilise available and

additional channels.

Given the current onerous and burdensome requirements on local

broadcasters, new entrants, in particular local in the

broadcasting sector and restrictions on the community media

that renders local broadcasting players uncompetitive, the

department will finalise the Draft Audio and Audio-Visual

Content Services Policy and Bill to protect the

competitiveness and growth of the South African broadcasting

and creative industry and amending the requirements for entry



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to advance media diversity whilst enabling the participation

of South Africans.

In addition, technological convergence has created regulatory

overlaps and duplications where they did not exist before. To

deal with this fragmentation a single content regulatory

system that is tech and platform neutral, that includes a

single content rating system is needed to create a harmonised

system. The Films and Publication Amendment Act, Act 11 of

2019, which the President operationalized on 1 March 2022, has

significantly extended the scope of the Films and Publication

Board, FPB, towards this objective and we will work to align

the responsibilities of the codes of conduct governing content

matters between Icasa and the FPB to support the provisions of

the Films and Publications Amendment Act. This alignment is

necessary to address the concerns from traditional

broadcasting and audio-visual services licensees regarding the

how the big tech companies are impacting on their revenues

without contributing much to the development of the industry

and local economy owing to the lack of regulatory parity.

Content creators, including news are concerned about the usage

of their content by the big techs without payment or without

any regulatory intervention.



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As we table this Budget Vote, we remain concerned about the

focus of the SABC on taking advantage of the technological

advances and thus driving its competitiveness and

sustainability. Basically, the SABC remains stuck in the past

in an era where technological advances have changed how

viewers consume their media content and the predominately

youthful population demand compelling and informative content.

The traditional television box is the past as viewers consume

content on the go, and viewers want to watch and hear

themselves or their peers or content that is value adding to

their development. We have given the board and management of

the SABC until 30 June 2022 to submit a plan on how the public

broadcaster is going to commercialise and monetize the

opportunities availed through the broadcast digital migration.

The SABC has also been directed on the prioritisation and

promotion of local content in its programme acquisition.

On our part we continue to advance policy and Ministerial

interventions that support the competitiveness and

sustainability of the SABC. To this end and through the

Minister of Finance, we secured a PFMA exemption for the SABC

and we continue to work with the Minister of Finance on the TV

license fee waiver. The regulator - ICASA - has published the



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Must-Carry Regulations for the broadcasters that utilise the

SABC content to have viable commercial agreements with the

SABC.

We are also finalizing the draft SA Broadcasting Corporation

SOC Ltd Bill for Cabinet approval before submission to

Parliament. The draft Bill positions the SABC as a multimedia

organization capable of offering services across all

platforms. The Bill proposes provisions that will improve the

governance of the SABC to make it commercially competitive

whilst protecting its role as a national broadcaster. A weak

SABC is not beneficial for the South African broadcasting and

creatives industry. The SABC will rise again to be a

broadcasting giant in our country and region.

By digitizing processes, government can enhance services, save

money, and improve citizens’ quality of life. By digitizing,

governments can provide services that meet the evolving

expectations of citizens and businesses, even in a period of

tight budgets. Digitizing a government requires attention to

two major considerations: the core capabilities for engaging

citizens and businesses, and the organizational enablers that



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support those capabilities. This prescribes to us to stop

boiling the ocean.

The Sita in consultation with the Departments of Public

Service and Administration and Communications & Digital

Technologies, will finalise a Government Digitization Plan. We

have, through the Sita commenced with some of the programmes

to digitize the South African government. These include single

view of the indigent project. This system is built on the

database created by the Sita to enable SA Post Office to

receive applications for government set-top boxes or the STB

registration system for the BDM project. The system has now

been expanded for use to manage housing subsidy beneficiaries

by the Department of Human Settlement with back-end

integration to the Housing Subsidy System. The Department of

Human Settlement will immediately use this system in the

management of housing beneficiaries of the KwaZulu-Natal and

Eastern Cape flood disaster. Engagements are similarly

underway with the Department of Health and Basic Education to

expand the system to their environments.

To support this programme, the department will recruit

approximately 2 500 unemployed graduates from the 44 districts



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and eight metros as data capturers to convert the current

paper records into the system.

To expand the work of bridging the digital divide through

digitizing South Africa, .za Domain Name Authority, .zaDNA, is

partnering with the Department of Basic Education to deploy

domain names in public schools through the provision of

websites and email addresses to learners and educators. The

Deputy Minister will expand on this catalytic project as the

department supports the Department of Basic Education in their

path towards e-learning for all.

On paperless government - the COVID-19 pandemic has propelled

to move electronic communications, even the national Cabinet

has experienced an increase of Ministers and Deputy Ministers

using an electronic Cabinet record system, commonly known as

e-Cabinet. Within the existing technologies and framework

agreements, the department will work with the Sita and the

DPSA to ensure that, at a minimum, all national departments go

paperless by using electronic workflow by the end of current

financial year. This will improve the efficiency of government

and maintain the integrity of government records that are a

challenge for the audit processes.



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The department and the Sita in consultation with the DPSA and

The Presidency will revise the current implementation of the

National e-Government Strategy to align with the government

digitisation plan. The focus of the roll-out of e-services

will remain on prioritising high impact public services that

meet the evolving expectations of citizens and businesses.

Citizens must be able to access bulk of government services

without the need to travel or braving the long queues.

Yesterday, as part of the World Telecommunications and

Information Society Day celebrations, I unveiled the DigiTech

platform which a platform for digital products or applications

... [Time expired.] ... [Inaudible.] ... in South Africa.

DigiTech serves as a digital distribution service developed,

maintained, and operated by the South African government. The

platform allows users to browse and download apps developed

across operating systems. It promotes South African developed

digital products or apps for purposes of expand their adoption

and use.

We are currently exploring how the current Sita and supply

chain management regulations can be ...



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Mr B M MANELI: Hon members, Department of Communications and

Digital Technologies, DCDT, team, Deputy Minister, all other

Ministers, all other Deputy Ministers and fellow South

Africans, let me from the outset make it clear that I rise on

behalf of the ANC to support Budget Vote 30 Department of

Communications and Digital Technologies, DCDT. This debate

takes place today, a day after the World Telecommunication Day

in a month recognised in the country as Africa Month. Both

these events are taking place whilst we are still grappling

with the COVID-19 pandemic that has ravaged the world and it

is still with us. In this adversity Africa must see an

opportunity to accelerate its efforts in bridging the digital

divide and press ahead with game changing projects like

building smart cities, for example, Konza Technopolis in Kenya

and other smart cities planned in the continent’s such

examples. The deployment of internet connections ballooned

towers in remote areas. Once again Kenya and Vodacom plan to

deploy these in parts of Mozambique and Cabo Delgado comes to

mind. This will go a long way in building a digital economy

that is environmentally friendly in the African continent.

Fellow South Africans, in the context of South Africa it is

important to remind ourselves that the postapartheid regime



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its legacy has been reflected in how the departments have been

restructured making it difficult to address the socioeconomic

conditions faced by South Africans in order to do and ensure

the fulfilment of the mandate of putting our policies that

address the digital divide and afford people access, supply

side issue and infrastructure rollout and demand side to

facilitate inclusivity.

His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa in the 2019 and 2020

states of the nation address pronounced the rationalisation of

the state departments as state-owned companies, SOCs. The

Department of Communications and the Department of

Telecommunications and Postal Services were merged to form the

new Department of Communications and Digital Technologies,

DCDT, under one Ministry and one director-general. The mandate

of the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies

is to enable South Africa’s digital transformation to achieve

digital inclusion and economic growth by creating an enabling

policy and regulatory environment. This is done through the

implementation of existing legislation which provides for

participation of multistakeholders for inclusive digital

transformation intervention to reinforce competition and

facilitate innovation across the value chain. Measures to



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address issues by the information and communications

technology, ICT, and convergence and the establishment of the

new postal policy framework.

Hon Chairperson, the ANC’s 54th national conference, amongst

others, resolved the following. On the information and

communications technology, Resolution 2.5, the ANC must ensure

the implementation of the resolutions to support the Post

Office including that government business must avail to the

Post Office through intergovernmental framework to maximise

the use and value of the Post Office infrastructure to achieve

its developmental mandate. The Post Office should continuously

review its business models to cope with the changes arising

from the digital industrial revolution.

In 3.7, there must be a strong regulatory intervention to deal

with the question of high cost to communicate and the ANC must

support the campaign of data to fall and the monopolisation of

data. This is regarded as stifling economic inclusion. In 3.9,

government must review the mandate of the State Information

Technology Agency, Sita, to not only be procurer, but enable

local capacity production of software and hardware products,

unbundle the value chain, etc. The State Information



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Technology Agency should be transformed and repurposed to

provide high quality information technology and services

aligned to the digital age. In 3.11, As part of

rationalisation of SOCs, consideration must be made to

implement the decision to merge the Broadband Infraco, BBI,

and Sentech. This should be underpinned by the overall policy

on SOE reform to improve service delivery and investment in

infrastructure.

On broadcasting, in particular, 4.10, the digital terrestrial

television, DTT, presents an opportunity for the SABC to

introduce multichannel programming to ensure its viability as

a broadcaster of choice and this could ensure that

Parliamentary channel, community TV could be on the SABC’s

platform. SABC must be positioned as a content provider of

choice, protect and be a repository of our cultural identity,

etc.

In giving meaning to these resolutions on record it is

confirmed that the repurposing of Sita as a state ICT company

is beginning to show good results. The merge of BBI and

Sentech is underway to form a state digital infrastructure

company that will ensure the speedy delivery of the broadband



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connectivity and other services in order to be an important

player in the ICT sector especially at a time when Sentech

cannot depend on the SABC as major client.

The Post Office, after many years of mismanagement and misuse

of bail outs by predecessors, has now an agreed turnaround

strategy of the department supported by the committee which

needs the support of the National Treasury to succeed as the

Post Office cannot be allowed to fail given its role.

Fellow South Africans, information from the Statistics SA

reveals that there were 12,5 unemployed people during the

fourth quarter of 2021. The overall unemployment rate was

46,2%, youth was 77%, Africans 50,7% and African women 55,7%.

The Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga were 53,2%, 52,8% and

52,4% respectively. In addition, the Competition Commission’s

recent report titled, and I quote, “Measuring concentration

and participation in the South African economy: levels and

trends”, exposes high levels of concertation and dominance by

a few in the communication space. The example is that three

firms provides 75% of fibre connections with 80% of consumers

connected by the top four ICTs.



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It is against this reality that we must support and

congratulate the Independent Communications Authority of South

Africa, Icasa, on the auctioning of the spectrum and making

spectrum available for the wireless open access network zones

to be released once its model is finalised. We need to be

unapologetic in supporting the broad-based black economic

empowerment, BBBEE, intake in the precaution of programmes by

the Sentech, BBI, Universal Service Access Agency of South

Africa, Usaasa, Universal Service Access Fund, Usaf, and Sita.

All these are a direct response to transform the digital

economy to be inclusive as envisaged by the states of the

nation address and the resolutions of the ANC as already

stated.

Hon House Chairperson, the department has a budget of

R7,7 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF,

of which 72,2% is allocated for transfer to the entities for

their operations and for projects specific funding. The

compensation of employees is a second cost driver and the DCDT

has committed to remain within its ... [Recording stopped] on

this item.



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We remain confident that both the department and its entities

will be able to accelerate delivery irrespective of the

limited resources available. The Independent Communications

Authority of South working together with the Competition

Commission will be implementing the Competition Commission’s

report and its own data marketing enquiry report which is

important in the reduction of the cost to communicate.

We also welcome that the department will be using this Budget

Vote as an opportunity to fast-track legislative reforms some

of which are important for the sustainability of SABC as the

public broadcaster and the SA Post Office as an important

entity with universal service obligations.

Hon members, as I conclude allow me to quote from O R Tambo,

the late president of the ANC, while addressing the 48th

national conference in Durban in 1991, and I quote:

Before I sit down I wish to make a few observations. We

did not tear ourselves apart because of lack of progress

at times. We were always ready to accept our mistakes and

to correct them. Above all we succeeded to force and

defend the unity of the ANC and the unity of our people



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in general. Even in bleak moments we were never in doubt

regarding the winning of freedom. We have never been in

doubt that people’s course against all odds shall

triumph.

After years of setbacks we never have doubts that Icasa will

auction the spectrum, and indeed the spectrum has been

auctioned. The people want an economy that is transformed.

Even with the setbacks that targets are not completely

achieved, we must never doubt that the people’s course shall

triumph and that the economy will indeed be transformed to be

inclusive. The ANC, once again stands to support this Budget

Vote. I thank you.

Ms T BODLANI: House Chairperson, hon members and fellow South

Africans, on 29 March 2022 the Minister addressed the

committee and reassured the committee that the country’s

digital migration connection was on track. The Minister stated

that she had personally overseen the distribution process of

900 000 set top boxes.

That said it would be remiss of us to not see how the ruling

of the Johannesburg High Court on the e-TV and others vs



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Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies and others

as a saving grace for the Minster and her department. The

deferment of the analogue switch-off date from 31 March to 30

June has undeniably given the department a reprieve, as it was

clear that they would have been left embarrassed by missing

their self-imposed deadline on the rollout. We stand in

agreement with the sentiment of the court that it is in the

interest of the country, the economy and South Africans that

the digital migration be finalised.

The DA is mindful that the release of more spectrum by the

Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, ICASA,

means a better quality service for consumers with fewer

dropped calls, faster internet download speeds and the promise

of lower data costs. Sadly, the last time South Africa

released spectrum was 2004-05. Therefore, the DA welcomes the

auctioning of high demand spectrum licensing by ICASA, with

the hope that it will indeed serve as a key pillar for the

state’s economic structural reforms.

The slow pace of releasing the spectrum is a reminder that

more than 28 years into democracy the digital divide remains

and dare I say widens. This is a serious indictment on the



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ruling party and we note the efforts of civil society in

fighting for the poor to have access to digital services.

Sadly, while ICASA and Telkom were embroiled in a legal

battle, and the country left in limbo on the auction process,

very little information came to the committee, and as such, as

members of this committee had to rely on media reports for

updates, as the matter of spectrum auction was never placed on

the recent formal agenda of the committee, while the auction

and its challenges unfolded.

This speaks to the lux lustre processes of this Parliament.

The mandate of portfolio committees as oversight bodies is

clear, however the tendency of dealing with serious matters

retrospectively continues, and this is a threat to our

democracy. The DA calls on this Parliament to strive to deal

with matters in real time, if we are to improve anything in

South Africa.

The total capital expenditure requirement for State IT Agency,

SITA, for the financial year 2022-23 is budgeted at

R750 million. However, the actual total capex requirement far

exceeds this amount. The notion that SITA may have to consider



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borrowing as well as applying for conditional grants in ...

[Sound lost] ...

Mr M S MALATSI: House Chair, I think she is being load-sheded.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): No, I am there. Can you

hear me?

Mr M S MALATSI: Yes, we can hear you, House Chair. I think she

is just ... [Interjections.]

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Oh, it’s the member. Can

we then move to the next speaker?

Mr M S MALATSI: House Chair, before we do so, can we just

establish with you whether she will be allowed to finish her

speech or can ...

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Yes, she will be

allowed.

Mr M S MALATSI: Thank you.



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The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Can we ask the hon Tambo

of the EFF?

Mr S TAMBO: House Chair, we would be committing a disservice

to the people of South Africa if we did not begin by

condemning the dishonourable, alarming and inhumane

revelations of Ministers, Deputy Ministers and officials in

this department spending over R15 million on accommodation and

catering since 2019. Unbeknown to us all, is why these

parasites spent so much money on accommodation and catering

during a global pandemic where meetings and engagements were

held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Today, some of

these very parasites are amongst us addressing us and planning

a budget with us simply because they conveniently belong to

... [Interjections.]

Mr B A RADEBE: Chairperson, I am rising on Rule 84. The member

has just used an unparliamentary language by calling members

of the House parasites.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Yes, that is correct,

hon member.



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Mr S TAMBO: Chair, which members were referred to as

parasites?

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): No, whoever is the

member, you said they are parasites. They are honourable

members. Can you withdraw that statement?

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Chair, I do not agree. I mean he has not said

a specific person is a parasite; he is just saying that

parasites in this ... [Interjections.]

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): No, we have hon members.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Can you please allow hon Tambo to finish his

speech, please?

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): I will only allow ...

[Interjections.]

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Hon Radebe, just wait. We know you get paid

for calling points of order. Just wait. [Interjections.]



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The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Hon Maotwe, I have given

a ruling to say that hon member Tambo must withdraw that

statement. [Interjections.]

Mr N L S KWANKWA: But it is a stray bullet, Chair, with

respect. It is like when we say "la masela” [these thieves] in

the House, we are not referring to anyone specific.

[Interjections.]

Mr A H M PAPO: No, point of order, hon member Kwankwa and hon

Tambo. Chair? [Interjections.]

Mr B A RADEBE: Chairperson?

Mr S TAMBO: But if there are people who feel like they are

parasites they must say so, so that we can know who not to

call parasites. Who feels they are parasites? [Interjections.]

Mr A H M PAPO: Order on what member Kwankwa said and member

Tambo.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Hon Tambo, can you

please withdraw that statement?



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Mr S TAMBO: I withdraw, Chair.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): You withdraw, thank you

very much. Proceed then.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: But Chair, you must also be fair. He never

referred to any specific member. You must not be bullied by

hon Radebe who is just getting paid all the time for calling

points of order. There is not a single sitting where Radebe

does not call a point of order, even when a fly passes, he

calls a point of order. That is his job; he gets paid for

that. [Interjections.]

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Hon Maotwe, can I appeal

to you to ask for recognition. You cannot just speak.

Otherwise, you would be disrupting the proceedings. Hon Tambo,

can you proceed?

Mr S TAMBO: Today, some of these people are amongst us

addressing us planning a budget with us simply because they

conveniently belong to the correct faction. They must be

ashamed that in the face of massive retrenchments, closure of

businesses and death, they lived a lavish lifestyle. They must



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address us knowing that we know them for what they are — as

leaches, opportunists and vultures who circled around the dead

bodies of our people in a time of tragedy.

House Chair, we are here today to reject this budget which is

characterised by austerity that defines this incompetent

government. It is a department defined by inadequacy due to

budget constraints and a misuse of money. The implementation

of the SA Connect Broadband Policy adopted almost a decade

ago, which seeks to provide broadband connectivity to district

municipalities has been a complete failure. Yet, we are told

in this report that we must transition to phase two of the

project. Phase one, which set out to connect 6135 government

facilities which include schools, health facilities, post

offices, police stations and government office, in the eight

rural district municipalities to broadband services, only

managed to connect 970 government facilities. So, on what

basis to you plan to transition to phase two?

The auction of spectrum has proved to be a disaster which has

reaffirmed the ... [Inaudible.] ... of MTN and Vodacom. There

is little hope that data prices will ever fall. In the main,

the market will continue to be dominated by Vodacom and MTN,



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both of which left the auction with an additional 110mhz and

100mhz respectively. With Vodacom and MTN each spending R5,4

billion and R5,2 billion, it means now all the money will now

have to be recovered through the ordinary consumer. In

essence, the hope for more competition in the market to force

data prices to fall is lost, possibly for good. This is while

the consumers will be paying the price. Data will continue to

be expensive and a thing for the rich and privileged.

Your lack of planning and concern for the poor is further

exhibited by your handling of the process of digital

migration. Television services are part of the modern

information age. In fact, it is part of the Constitutional

right to access information, particularly as it relates to

government actions, decisions and reports.

An estimate of over 8 million, mainly poor, South Africans

will be left out of the free to air television services should

the analogue signal be immediately switched off on the

deadline that has been set now without provision of said top

boxes to the poor. A simple strategy would be to use the SASSA

data base as a legitimate basis to distribute said top boxes,

because your application system is exclusionary and elitist.



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But because you have no imagination beyond hotel bookings, our

people must suffer.

Instead of doing this, spending in the broadcasting digital

migration sub-programme in the ICT infrastructure development

and support programme is expected to decrease from R1,3

billion in 2021-22 to 84,1 million in 2024-25 at an average

annual rate of 59,5%. At SANTEC revenue is expected to

decrease at an average annual rate of 1,3% from 1,5 billion in

2021-22 to 1,4 billion in 2024-25 because of the analogue

signal being switched off, resulting in television revenue

decreasing slightly before recovering again. This is yet

another indicator of your lack of planning around digital

migration. This is effectively a decision to take a majority

of our population into the dark ages. For the SABC,

advertising revenue is expected to increase by 13% in the

financial year 2023. We must applaud ICASA and specifically

the EFF for ensuring that the parasitic must carry regulations

amended to require subscription broadcasters to carry the

public broadcaster’s channels subject to commercially

negotiable terms. The report should have, however, outlined

what percentage of the projected revenue increases in

advertising stem from the adding of the public broadcaster’s



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content on subscription broadcasters. Thirteen percent does

not seem like a convincing figure of an outcome of a

commercially negotiated terms with subscription broadcasters

over the public broadcaster content.

At the South African Post Office you have implemented a

shallow thinking of attempting to rescue the financial

position of an entity by firing people. What you call the

staff optimisation project is simply retrenchments. You have

resolved to retrench 6 021 workers at the post office by 2024-

25 only to decrease your expenditure which will only decrease

your expenditure by 4,8%. No where does this illustrate how

you will rejuvenate postal service. There is no illustration

of how the entity will be revolutionised and capacitated to be

able to compete with emerging private sector courier services

in particular.

Retrenchments are at the centre of your doomed strategy. The

entities in this department are characterised by poor

management, debt and lack of strategic setting of achievable

objectives in line with the dependable allocation of a budget.

It is a department led by people with no appetite to integrate

our people into adequate ICT infrastructure and determined to



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exclude the poor in the agenda of digital migration, internet

connectivity and access to information. It is a department led

by parasites. We reject this Budget Vote. [Time expired.]

Thank you.

Mr M S MALATSI: House Chair, there is a point of order here.

House Chair, with regard to the member from the DA, my

colleague, we propose that the three minutes she had left be

added to myself being Malatsi on the list because she will not

be able to return to continue with her speech. Thank you.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): It is two minutes

something, but we have recorded that.

Mr M S MALATSI: Yes, it was two minutes and 38 seconds.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Let us not argue about

it. Can I now call on hon Singh of the IFP?

Mr B A RADEBE: Chairperson?

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Hon Radebe?



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Mr B A RADEBE: The previous speaker has repeated again that

the members of this House who are leading the department are

parasites. I think that something must be done around that.

Thank you, Chair. It is unparliamentary.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): I have noted it. Can we

proceed, hon Singh?

Mr A H M PAPO: On a point of order in terms of Rule 84. The

same member called the leaders of this department vultures and

all sorts of animal names he used which is not allowed in

terms of parliamentary language. You must look at that because

he did not only use parasites but he also used names of

animals.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Wena man Hope, we are busy please.

Mr S TAMBO: Vultures, leaches and parasites.

Mr A H M PAPO: Chair, she opened her mic without being

recognised. This is the third time she does that.



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The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Hon Papo, I have noted

the comments of the hon member. I will follow up on that. Can

I now allow hon Singh?

Mr N SINGH: Chairperson, I was hesitating a bit, in case

somebody else came in. I present the comments on behalf of the

IFP, as prepared by hon Majozi, who is currently on sick

leave. The communication space, where the Department of

Communication and Digital Technology locates itself is fast-

paced and ever-changing. As the IFP, we therefore note the

announcement that, and I quote: “The DCDT will in the medium

term focus on developing new and revising existing policies,

strategies and legislation.” This is an important step,

considering the country’s national Integrated ICT policy White

Paper is a 2016 document and more than five years out of date.

Sadly, many of the department’s commitments are not worth the

paper they are printed on. Take for instance the commitment

listed in the committee’s report that, the analogue

transmitter switch-off is targeted for 31 Mar 2022 across all

provinces. It is now common knowledge that department failed

to meet this deadline, which has yet again been extended to 30

June 2022.



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While we can understand that the information in the report

might not be up to date and we heard the Minister speak on

this, as it was collated some time ago, there is no excuse for

the department’s website to be outdated. On the home page,

banners are still saying, and I quote: “Register at the

nearest post office before 31 October 2021 to get a free

digital decoder installation.” It still says: “Registration

after 31 October 2021 will only be connected three to six

months after the switch-off.”

While these outdated notices could be viewed as an

embarrassment to the department, the real embarrassment is

that South Africa has not yet completed its digital migration.

And the country is much more than a few months off the pace.

The initial analogue terrestrial television switch-off

deadline, as per the then Minister Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri, was

1 November 2011. That was more than 10 years ago. Not only did

we miss our internal deadlines, South Africa is the biggest

loser in Africa too, as we failed to make the International

Telecommunication Union analogue broadcast switch-off deadline

on 17 June 2015.



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The Question is what has government been doing in the seven

years since. Six months ago, the Deputy Minister of

Communications, Minister Mapulane, said, and I quote: “We are

late, as we know that the entire continent has migrated and we

are the last to migrate as a country and it is something we

should not really be proud of, given our resources. As a

country, we should have been the one leading this migration.”

Yet, despite admitting to having resources and then admitting

shame and being left in the dust, the department again failed

to meet its deadline of 31 March 2022. One shivers to think

what this protracted delay on the part of government has cost

the people of South Africa, not only in rand and cents, but in

opportunities.

Then we have SA Connect, a 2013 initiative, which, and I

quote: “seeks to meet the technology goals of the NDP”. Phase

one was meant to provide connectivity to 6 135 government

facilities. The department manage only 970 facilities, leaving

5 165 facilities that were not provided with the broadband

service. Budget constraints were cited as the reason for this

pitiful performance, but surely, such a huge discrepancy



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between the envisioned outcome and actual results should have

become evident in the planning stages.

As the IFP, we have to ask, is any planning, monitoring and

evaluation taking place in this department? How is performance

measured? When the people of South Africa are left isolated

and disconnected, who is being taken to task and held

responsible? Where is consequence management? The department’s

laundry list of failures and missteps goes on and on and as

one examines the portfolio committee report, it is difficult

to find anything to celebrate.

Let us talk about the SA Post Office - R4,2 billion in debt

with pitiful prospects. The SABC is, amongst others, and I

quote: “unable to achieve annual target revenues” and “greater

concerns about the improper governance practices”. Sentech is

“struggling to attract new customers”.

As the IFP, we are deeply concerned that the inability of this

department to achieve its targets, maintain clean audits and

even deal with the most basic of services ... [Inaudible.] ...

subject to the above serious concerns, which we expect the



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Minister to provide us with effective remedial action, the IFP

will reluctantly support this Budget Vote.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Hon Tambo, I gave a

Ruling and you agreed to withdraw a statement that you have

made. I think hon members know that, if they don’t agree with

a ruling of the Chairperson, they know what they are supposed

to do. Now, you repeated that when you were leaving the

platform. Can I call on you to withdraw the statements that

you made, because I did give a ruling? Otherwise, that will be

seen as something that negatively impacts on what we are doing

as this Mini-Plenary. Can I ask hon Tambo to withdraw the

statement that he made, as he was going to sit down? Hon

Tambo, are you still on the platform? I am talking to hon

Tambo. Other members, I think, the engagement when I have

given the ruling is actually disruptive. Well, I think I have

given my expectation to hon Tambo of what I expect him to do.

Mr W WESSELS: Hon Chairperson, a lot can and has been said

about the state of the public broadcaster - the delay in the

release of broad spectrum, missing deadlines and the

repetition of empty promises each year, as well as the lack of

consequence management in this department and its entities.



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However, I want to focus on the South African Post Office,

which is and should be a backbone and very critical to

economic development. And postal services are especially

crucial to small business development. As of 31 January 2022,

the South African Post Office owed landlords R304 million for

their rent. That, obviously caused a lot of branches of the

South African Post Office to be closed, locked because of the

outstanding rent.

Whilst a lot of poor people in South Africa are dependent on

grants and post offices to receive those grants, it is

unacceptable that nothing is being done about this. This is a

failure of the most vulnerable, where people need access to

post office branches, especially for their Social Relief of

Distress grants during the past couple of months and the

Covid-19 period.

Now, the Post Office is selling 14 of their properties to try

and cover their debt, but these auctions will only cover 8% of

the outstanding debt to landlords. That is a huge problem.

Also, it is of concern that the reserve prices listed for most

of these properties are lower than market value. Why is an



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entity that is in financial trouble selling off assets at a

lower price than it should be? It just does not make sense.

At the end of the financial year ending 31 March 2020, the

losses incurred by the Post Office was R1,8 billion. Its

current liabilities exceed its assets by R1,5 billion. It for

instance owes Telkom R269 million.

What is the cause of the total destruction and collapse of the

Post Office? It is not the business model, it is not the

sector in which it is operating, because there is a lot of

private-sector companies that are making a lot of money and

are lucrative, providing and serving the gap that was left by

the Post Office, which failed. Courier services are doing

well.

Now, the business model is changing and there are all kinds of

proposals to get the Post Office in other sectors and cash

cows and so forth, but that is not the reason why the Post

Office is collapsing and has been destroyed. The reason is

because of corruption. The reason is because of a bloated

staff component. It is because of financial mismanagement. It

is because of financial and management instability. It is



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about incompetence. A lot of people have to go to the private

sector and other courier companies, because of the fact that

parcels get lost and it is complete chaos at post offices.

*Afrikaans*:

Die Postkantoor is vernietig, net soos die SABC, deur boewe en

parasiete, en dis waaroor dit gaan. Dit het niks met die

dienste te doen nie. Dis die totale mislukking van die ANC-

regering wat die Poskantoor en al die ander entiteite van

hierdie regering totaal en al vernietig het, en u laat die

mense van Suid-Afrika in die steek. Ek dank u.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Can I call on the Deputy

Minister? As I do so, I will be handing over to hon Dyantyi.

Hon Thabo has left the platform. Let us leave it at that.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: House Chair, on a point of order: It is very

dangerous for you to say that hon Tambo left. What informs

that? My point of order is that you are wrong. How did you

arrive to the conclusion that he left? There are network

issues here. Why do you conclude that he left? It could have

been a network problem.



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The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Hon Maotwe, can I be

allowed to Chair this session up to the end. I am saying that

I have been advised by the people who are controlling the

system. If he left because of what you are saying, it is still

fine. I could not speak to him. That is what I was demanding

from him, to say that he must withdraw that statement. If he

is not there, I think we will take up the matter. Can I allow

the Deputy Minister to take over and allow hon Dyantyi?

Mr A H M PAPO: Chair, on a point of order: I rise in terms of

Rule 84. The last speaker from the FF Plus thinks that some of

us cannot understand suiwer [pure] Afrikaans. He also used the

word “parasites” in Afrikaans. Look at the record and you will

see. He thought we don’t understand Afrikaans.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): We will look at the

records. [Interjections.]

Mr W W WESSELS: Chairperson, on a point order: It has nothing

to do with the fact that other members will not understand it.

I will say it in English as well. The Post Office was

destroyed by parasites.



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The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Can we move on?

Ms O M C MAOTWE: No, I think, we must call him. We must ask

him to withdraw. Please, ask him to withdraw.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Hon Wessels, can you

withdraw that?

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Chair, what would he be withdrawing?

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Actually, I have given a

Ruling in the first statement that was made and I communicated

… [Interjections.] Hon members, if you don’t agree with the

Ruling that I have given, you know what process to follow.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Chair, in the original Ruling, I think the

person who rose on a point of order took exception to the fact

that someone might have referred to hon Members of Parliament

as parasites. Now, hon Wessels is saying that the Post Office

was destroyed by parasites. So, what is wrong with that

statement?



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The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): So, there is a

difference.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: There is a difference, a complete

difference.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Let me look at it and

come back. I think that I agree with you. That is why I was

saying that I was not calling on him to withdraw. I agree with

you. He did not say the same thing in the same way that was

said by hon Tambo. Can that be my Ruling? I will not ask him

to withdraw. [Interjections.]

*Sepedi:*

Moh O M C MAOTWE: O a ba tṧhaba makgowa, mokgekolo.

*(Translation of Sepedi sentence follows.)*

[Ms O M C MAOTWE: You are scared of white people, old lady.]

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Hon Maotwe, allow this

session to go on properly.



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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL

TECHNOLOGIES: Thank you very much, House Chairperson, hon

Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, hon

Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, hon members of our portfolio committee

as led by Chairperson Maneli, and all the hon Members of

Parliament, the Acting Director-General, and other senior

departmental officials, esteemed guests, fellow South

Africans. On this day, 90 years ago, a towering giant of South

Africa’s National Democratic Revolution was born. Born into a

working-class family ... [Interjections.] ...

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr Q R Dyantyi): Hon Deputy Minister,

just hold.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Hon Chair.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr Q R Dyantyi): What is your point of

order, hon member?

Ms O M C MAOTWE: I am wondering if the Deputy Minister would

like to take a question.



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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL

TECHNOLOGIES: I am glad to take a question as soon as I finish

my speech.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr Q R Dyantyi): Thank you. Question

declined. Go ahead, Deputy Minister.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL

TECHNOLOGIES: Born into a working-class family in a village in

Engcobo in the then Transkei, Walter Sisulu, grew up to be one

of the outstanding leaders of the ANC in the struggle against

apartheid-colonialism. The nation owes this gallant hero of

our liberation struggle, and indeed his generation of freedom

fighters, a great debt of gratitude for the indelible

contribution he and others have made towards our political

liberation. We in the glorious movement for which Walter

Sisulu belonged, the ANC, vow never to betray the course for

which he sacrificed his life. We shall continue with the

fundamental programme of socioeconomic transformation to bring

about changes to the majority of our people, blacks in general

and Africans in particular.



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Hon Chair, the notion that the ministry spends millions on

accommodation must be rejected with the contempt it deserves,

as it is nothing but sensational reporting and a populist

posture devoid of any tool. The facts are there for anybody

who is interested. The department is committed to transforming

the Information and Communication Technology, ICT, sector and

to building a digital economy in a manner that no one is left

behind. In this regard, Chair, I would like to emphasise the

points raised by the Minister, that as a department we have

migrated indigent household in five of the nine provinces from

analogue to digital broadcasting, and we are well on course to

meet the June deadline that was set by the court.

We have connected 970 government facilities under the SA

Connect phase one and we are well underway to roll-out phase

two of the SA Connect project, we have trained over 91 211

citizens in digital skills and provided over 7 700 courses,

among some of the achievements of the department. We remain

committed to ensuring that the opportunities presented by the

digital economy are not the preserve of a privileged few, but

are indeed enjoyed by all the people of our country. We owe

this to the memory of Walter Sisulu. Hon Chair, the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development, acknowledges that the



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spread of information and communication technology and global

interconnectivity has great potential to accelerate human

development and to bridge the digital divide.

According to the recent General Household Survey from Stats

SA, the proportion of households who use only cellular phones

as a means of communication increased by 1,6% from 87,8% in

2019 to 89,40% in 2020. Households using both cellular phones

and fixed or landlines increased from 7,1% in 2018 to 8,3% in

2019. The above statistical information abundantly illustrates

the point that ours is a fast-growing sector with a huge

impact to make in the socioeconomic development of our

country. Much has been said about the SA Post office, SAPO.

The SAPO, since its establishment on the 02 March 1792, in a

small room next to the pantry of a Cape Town Castle by the

colonial settlers, has evolved and grown over the years to

being the vehicle for service delivery and connecting the

unconnected through its wide footprint of over 2 400 points of

presence in the country and international network reaching

over 187 countries.

Over the years, this important national asset has experienced

significant revenue decline as a result mainly of the changing



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market conditions exacerbated by the rapid technological

advancements, leading to the declining volumes of letter post

which was the core of the business of the Post Office. Since

then, SAPO has been struggling to reposition itself in line

with the changed market conditions. Since assuming office in

August last year, the Minister and myself have been seized

with helping SAPO to reposition itself, which efforts

culminated in the adoption of the Post Office of Tomorrow

strategy. Through this strategy, we are committed to

repositioning SAPO to provide a diversified and expanded

services, to positioning it as a logistics platform for e-

commerce. We will digitise the Post Office to be a dedicated

and designated authentication authority that fulfils its role

as a national trust centre in the age of digital identity and

services.

Through its expansive infrastructure and postal network, we

will transform the Post Offices, especially in the rural

areas, to become digital hubs so to serve communities as well

as be a platform for unemployed youth and potential

entrepreneurs. As the government remains committed to the

turnaround of SAPO to be financially sustainable as well as to

re-engineering its products and service portfolio. We are



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engaged with National Treasury on the required

recapitalisation of the entity. As we reposition SAPO to be

the leading logistic service provider for South Africa and the

region, we will forge strategic partnerships that are crucial

enablers for SAPO’s e-commerce and logistics strategy. In this

regard, the department has finalised the SA Post Office

Amendment Bill in line with the Post Office of Tomorrow

strategy.

The Bill is out for public comment after being approved by

Cabinet recently. We hope to submit it to Parliament before

the end of this year so that it can be processed. We will soon

be finalising the filling of the vacancies in the board and

capacitate the entity at executive management levels. Hon

House Chair, the internet has become an integral part of our

everyday life, changing how we live, work, and interact with

each other. The age of the internet has not only brought about

the convergence of technologies, which is continuously

blurring traditional market distinctions and boundaries, but

also with the rapid proliferation of and ubiquitous online

streaming platforms which resulted in connected citizens, and

so, the state must, consistent with the injunctions of the

Constitution to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the



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fundamental rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights, regulate

the creation, production, possession and distribution of

films, games, certain publications and content distributed

online that may be deemed harmful or prohibited using the

Films and Publication Act.

We are extremely delighted on the coming into operation on the

01 March 2022 of the Amendment Act of 2019 though a

proclamation by the President. This Amendment Act has

transformed the Film and Publication Board, FPB, from a

historically narrow classification authority into a fully-

fledged regulator, with legitimate powers to issue and renew

content distribution licenses to both local and international

distributors, and develop regulations to enforce compliance,

impose penalties in case of noncompliance. Given the fact that

the scope and mandate of the FPB has increased threefold, we

requested the entity to re-imagine its future role through the

development of the Online Content Regulator of the Future

strategy, for which I am delighted to report that it has been

finalised and submitted to the department.

The Online Content Regulator of the Future proposes a

fundamental shift in both the governance and funding model,



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including looking at the fragmentation and regulatory overlaps

among the different regulators in the country and proposes

measures to improving regulatory efficiencies. We welcome the

proposal in the strategy for a single content regulatory

system that is technology and platform neutral. Efforts are

already underway to transform the entity to align it with the

new expanded mandate. Hon Chair, we plan to launch The Online

Safety Youth Council during the month of June at a Youth

Online Safety Summit as part of the National Youth Month. The

main objective being to involve the South African youth in

promoting online safety as prescribed for in the Act.

In doing so, we recognise that the youth are not only the

biggest consumers of content online, they are equally the

biggest victims of cyberbullying. According to Global Advisor

Cyberbullying study, cyberbullying has significantly increased

in South Africa with 25% of parents saying that their children

have been victims of cyberbullying. Hon members, digital

technologies such as digital automation, artificial

intelligence, AI, robotics, augmented reality, 3D printing,

and a range of other digital technologies, are changing the

nature of jobs that were routinely performed by humans. As

various sectors of the economy continue to use and depend on



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these new digital technologies, the legacy skills as well as

existing ICT skills are becoming obsolete, and this increases

the demand for new digital skills.

These changes require humans to be equipped with the relevant

and necessary skills to perform the new jobs. To address the

Digital Skills deficit in South Africa, the National Digital

and Future Skills Strategy seeks to ensure that the youth of

South Africa are provided with the necessary level of basic

digital skills, that will enable them to function within a

21st century world that is increasingly pervaded by and

dependent upon digital technologies. To date, the National

Electronic Media Institute of SA, NEMISA, have trained 6 000

people on Digital Literacy and a total of 7000 trained on

other digital skills like Data Science, cloud computing and

machine learning. The department partnered with GIZ to train

2000 youth not in employment education and training on Digital

Literacy.

The NEMISA plans to train 60 000 small, medium and micro

enterprises, SMMEs, on Digital Entrepreneurship programmes and

14 950 in Broadcasting skills. The NEMISA has been directed to

also focus more on partnerships with other state entities and



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government departments. In this regard the Memorandums of

Understanding, MOUs, have been concluded with, among others:

The Department of Military Veterans to train military veterans

on various digital technology skills to the tune of over

R27 million, the Banking Sector Education and Training

Authority, BANKSETA, to train a number of banking

beneficiaries on various digital technologies to the tune of

R59 million, Media Information Communication Technology Sector

Education and Training Authority, MICT SETA, on its

discretionary grant, for learnerships in the Western Cape,

Mpumalanga, and Gauteng. In conclusion, hon Chair, Walter

Sisulu counsels us that:

There are no short-cuts. There are no easy answers. There

are no complete formulas. Only continuous campaigning

among the people, with continuous response to their own

activities, taking them a step forward each time, can

lead us to our goal.

This prophetic articulation by our revered freedom fighter, is

what guides us in our service to the nation. I would like to

thank you.



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Mr N L S KWANKWA: Hon Acting House Chairperson, you will

recall that it is public knowledge that the Independent

Communications Authority of South Africa, Icasa, collected

about R14,4 billion during the recent spectrum auction. In

fact, President Ramaphosa reacting to the spectrum auction he

said:

The auction of spectrum is an important achievement. It

was delayed for many years due to the policy drift, state

incapacity and vested interests that were a feature of

the era of State Capture.

Probably, the President also forgot to mention that the

spectrum allocation was the first in 17 years and the process

obviously had been delayed for the reasons that he had stated.

For these reasons, especially the one where he cited

incapacity as a problem, we take all the commitments that had

been made by the Minister and the department here with a pinch

of salt due to the numerous deadlines they have missed on a

number of issues. We made these points believing that there

should be stricter timeframes that should be set for the

reduction of communication costs in South Africa.



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We are saying this primarily because, I am sure many of you

will remember that the failure to address to huge gap of

internet access between the rural and urban areas was evident

during the pandemic. We learnt the significance of having

internet access and it was said that learners and workers

residing particularly in the rural areas were suffering to

access internet and to be able to learn. It is important as we

make this point hon Chair, to remember that while we must

celebrate the auction of the spectrum, the recent auction,

China was already on 6G, when visited her on an official visit

in 2015. We were shown that very soon they might be on 8G. So,

while this is worth celebrating we still have a lot of

catching up to do with the rest of the world.

We welcome the plans and intentions to make sure that the post

offices become centres of technology.

*IsiXhos*a:

Kodwa maan ezi posi nithetha ngazo kufuneka zingafani naba

mpompi banganamanzi. Nina kaloku nibane nisincokolela

kwiintetha zenu eziyokozelayo, ezibhalwe ngobuchule ukuba

nigxumeke oompompi bamanzi kwiilali ezinga babe bengaphumi

manzi aboo mpompi. Uza kufumanisa ukuba la maziko ethokhnoloji



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nifuna ukuwenza, abantu bakuthi baza kuphinda bangakwazi

ukuwasebenzisa ...

*English*:

... due to maladministration and poor management of post

offices.

*IsiXhosa*:

Ningaba kwanina nohlulakele kwaphela, nditsho ukuthumela nje

iileta.

*English*:

All entities in this department should improve to position the

department as an enabler to an inclusive growth in the

Information Communication Technology. It is therefore very

important that we ensure that we speed up public’s internet

penetration rate, which is still very low by international

standards. It is at about 68,2% of the total population. This

means, even if we were able to push prices down ... [Time

expired.]

Mr B N HERRON: Hon House Chairperson, it is surely time for

South Africans to be having a serious conversation over



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whether having access to data like access to portable water

and health care should fall into the category of basic human

rights. By commodifying data and pricing it out of the range

of the majority of the citizens we are drastically restrict

access to the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

perpetuating and deepening inequality.

As things are, instead of levelling the playing fields as we

hoped it might, the much-heralded age of technology is serving

to heighten the mounds of privilege and deepen the troughs of

poverty. Government wants 80% of the population to have access

to the internet by 2024. But access to internet is of little

worth to those who cannot afford data. A bit like people with

theoretical access to electricity, but who live in the dark

because they cannot afford to pay for any of it.

According to the 2019 General Household Survey 64,7% of South

African households had at least one member with access to the

internet, either at home, work, place of study or internet

cafés. Just over 10% of South African households had access to

the internet at home. Yet more and more of modern life takes

place online. More people work remotely, access educational

materials on the internet, and do their shopping



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electronically. Digital skills are in higher demand in the

workplace, in the health-space and in commerce.

Those without the ability to fund data are once again being

left in the dirt. We have to ask ourselves if the re-

impoverishment of more-or-less the same group of people who

were deliberately impoverished under apartheid is either

desirable or sustainable. How do we grow an economy in an

environment in which most people cannot participate? It

beggars belief that the cost of data in South Africa is among

the highest in the world.

In his state of the nation address, President Ramaphosa drew

attention to the Competition Commission having instructed

mobile operators to adjust their pricing to reduce the digital

inequality. The operators lowered the poverty premium on low-

denomination, prepaid mobile bundles. But this is hardly

enough. The rich, with their greater purchasing power, still

pay less for data.

The President referred to the Competition Commission having

proposed a free lifeline data package to provide a certain

amount of free data daily at no cost. That would be a good



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place to start. For it to work for all, implies developing

sufficient telecommunications infrastructure to cover the

nation. It is time for this proposal to see the light of day.

With will and dexterity, we can close this gap, demonstrate

the value we put on reducing inequality, and lift the false

ceilings that trap the disconnected and keep them down. I

thank you Acting House Chairperson.

Mr L E MOLALA: Chairperson, hon Minister, hon members, fellow

South Africans, information and communication technologies

have become an increasingly important tool for development,

providing access to information for science technology

innovation and fostering and enhancing regional and

international co-operation.

Along with the rest of the world, South Africa has been

catapulted by the pandemic into an environment that require

rapid digital transformation. A study conducted by Harvard

University Review in 2019, reveal that South Africa is a

leading regional leader in the ease of creating digital jobs.

South Africa is also a regional leader in the deployment of

several emerging technologies such as biometric data, payment



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cars to deliver social security, drones in mining, which helps

it to keep at an innovative edge.

Our information communication technology, ICT, sector

continues to demonstrate signs of growth, recording

R246 billion in revenue in 2021, up from R224 billion in 2020.

According to the state of ICT sector report in South Africa

delivered by Independent Communications Authority of South

Africa, ICASA, earlier this year, the total sector revenue

increased by 0,3%.

Having noted all the advancement made, the ANC is of the view

that made, the ANC is of the view that it can be done to

leverage the ICT sector and all that the 4th Industrial

Revolution has to offer in order to respond to socioeconomic

challenges we face in our society today.

As we celebrate the opportunities that come with new

technology, allow me to also take this opportunity to

recognize one of the people who have contributed immensely

towards science innovation technology and engineering in our

country. The Deputy Chairperson of the Presidential Commission

on the 4th Industrial Revolution, Vice Chancellor of the



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University of Johannesburg, Professor Tshilidzi Marwala for

his election to the American Academy of Arts, and Sciences.

Professor Maralwa has been elected to the academy as a new

international honorary member to form part of the 261 members

elected this year. The ANC wish him well as he embarks in his

new journey and as we remain proud and confident that he will

fly the South African flag higher

Hon members, while ICT is seen as a powerful tool for economic

development and for effective and efficient service delivery

by government. Our country is still challenged with issues of

accessibility, usability and affordability. The inability to

access ICT is closely associated with poverty which is most

prevalent in our rural and poor areas of our country.

Since the pronouncement of the South African Connect Project

in 2013, the ANC-led government has been hard at work in

making sure that all South African have reliable ICT

infrastructure. To date, 970 government facilities have been

connected and a feasibility study has been conducted to

evaluate the resources that will be needed to carry out phase

two, which will see the completion of the remaining 5 185



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facilities that were not provided with broadband services due

to the limited budget allocation.

The ANC implores on National Treasury to make provision for

two of South Africa’s connect project as Ministry and

department also sourced out funding to ensure that the rest of

the country gets connected. We also implore the National

Treasury and the department to fast-track the upgrade and

rollout of 100Megabits per second, Mbps, connectivity as this

will optimise the modernisation, digitalisation and

transformation programmes for government. There has been a

rapid increase in the number of users utilising online

services for application such as remote working, online

learning, electronic healthcare and a subsequent requirement

for increased internet connectivity. The improving of internet

connectivity speed has become a necessity and therefore

requires to the South African connect infrastructure footprint

countrywide and it is of paramount important.

The ANC commends State Information Technology Agency SOC Ltd,

SITA, for the hard work that they have put toward turning

around the agency. Over the period ahead, the agency will

focus on the financial sustainability and has reconfigured its



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strategic programmes to complement the objectives of the

National Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

The ANC welcomes the allocation of R1,5 billion towards the

acquisition of assets over the Medium-Term Expenditure

Framework, MTEF. The agency generates revenue by providing ICT

infrastructure and services to government departments and

organs of state. Revenue is expected to increase at an average

rate of 4,3% from R6,2 billion in 2021-22 financial year to

R7,1 billion in 2024-25. This will contribute towards adding

the work of the agency.

Hon members, it is in this 6th Parliament that ICASA released

the long awaited spectrum in over 17-years. The ANC commends

the work of the council through the auction of R14,4 billion

that has been collected and will continue towards the national

fiscus. Not only with the funds benefit other key government

programmes that are focused on addressing the triple

challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality that

confronts our people on a daily basis. It will also provide

better quality services for consumers with fewer dropped

calls, faster internet downloads speeds and reduce mobile

data.



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The ANC notes that in order to increase the access to quality

broadband services, - The authority plans to implement the

radio frequency migration plan and develop monitoring report

on the impact of the deployment of 5G in the ICT sector. We

are of the view that an additional allocation of R300 million

2022-23 will assist the council in its effort to strengthen

regulatory capacity and licencing of spectrum for

international mobile telecommunication, specifically wireless

broadband services. For the mobile operators, spectrum

allocation will help provide faster and more widespread high

speed data service. It’s expected to feed up spectrum, will

increase access to internet and stimulate the growth of

business and the economic recovery effort. With that

presentation, the ANC supports this Budget Vote. I thank you.

Mr W M MADISHA: Thank you, hon Acting House Chair and members.

Cope has once again looked into the mandate of the department

today’s budget proposal to the House and the department’s

expenditure analysis. We have also accessed the challenges

faced by the South Africans, particularly the underprivileged

and the poor. Cope agrees that there are both national and

international information and communications technology, ICT,

demands that we can’t avoid. We agreed that like other



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countries of the world South Africa is faced with the Fourth

Industrial Revolution and to save all South African people,

Parliament must allot more and enough resources. It is not

only the relevant machinery, but is necessary to take South

Africa and her people forward, but also the human brains that

must be accessed to help with the implementation of the

required knowledge. This means that enough must have been

availed to ensure that enough educators and trainers are

employed.

On the SA Broadcasting Corporation, SABC, we know that SABC is

faced with many challenges which include those that have risen

due to technological advances, other forms or media houses

which have enough resources. If you were to compare them to

SABC the growing lack of interests for many companies when it

comes to advertisements, corruption as already identified by

the Auditor-General’s office and many other problems that need

a capable management and an independent board. The board which

is not pushed for the realisation of particular political

interests by certain political leaders. We truly need to look

into that which SABC has and has been continuing to do which

is basically out of order.



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On the SA Post Office, that is an extremely important entity

which is, as you all know, used by millions of South Africans

deep in the rural areas, in villages and in townships. More

must be done to improve their services by both ensuring enough

staff and resources. Now, all the other entities, I have no

time to mention, I believe that more must be done to address

incapacity by many amongst them. South Africans pay those

entities for nothing. The majority of them are given money

every year, but either fail to do what they are supposed to do

or misuse the money given to them by the South African

peoples.

The committee must address those problems as a matter of

urgency. Let me end by saying that it is ... we support the

Vote. Thank you, Acting House Chair. [Time expired.]

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Thank you very much, hon Acting House

Chair. Hon Acting House Chair, rural villages are always

lacking with the advancement ... [Inaudible.] water,

employment, house services and lately communications and

digital technology. Deputy Minister acknowledged that the

first resistance fighters against apartheid and for our

freedom came from former Transkei and even mentioned Walter



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Sisulu. Therefore, the first resistance fighters came from

Transkei that led to our liberation, but they are the last to

receive in this case ... [Inaudible.] Hon acting House Chair,

we will not make any progress as the Deputy Minister said that

there is no spot ... [Inaudible.] there has to be shortcut to

make up for the long delays that we have ... [Inaudible.] they

need data.

President Ramaphosa talks about the right to data not access

to data, the right to data. Therefore, let us hear that one

gig of data will be given especially to the people in the

rural villages ... [Inaudible.] only speak about Independent

Communications Authority of South Africa, Icasa. There are

many government programmes that are not communicated to the

people because this department has failed the nation.

Constituency offices are based in the heart of communities and

easily accessible. These constituency offices describe as

bringing Parliament to the people should be used by government

and Icasa to inform people and that should be part of their

licence conditions when they issue licenses to community radio

stations.



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Hon Acting House Chair, we heard this morning in a portfolio

committee that when it came to fibre Telkom and the other two

for five years oppressed those below ... [Inaudible.] they

wanted to enter the field. We are as Al Jama-ah very worried

that the same will now happen that the spectrum has been

allocated and they were undermined the small businesses, the

micro-businesses, the township businesses and when you lay a

complaint with the Speaker like they did now, they give you

millions in compensation. We don’t want compensation for small

businesses, we want empowerment. Thank you very much, hon

Acting House Chair.

Mr M S MALATSI: Hon House Chairperson, the efficiency of the

Department of Communications and Digital Technologies and its

multiple state-owned entities, SOEs have been hit the hardest

by the frequency of cabinet reshuffles and musical chairs at

the various boards. From the disastrous tenures of Nomvula

Mokonyane and Siyabonga Cwele to the prima donna days of

Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, the department and its

entities were the biggest victims of political interference

and abuse of state resources which almost collapsed them.



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The department’s budget for the current Medium-Term

Expenditure Framework, MTEF stands at R7,7 billion with

R5,4 billion dedicated to transfers to entities under its

portfolio. Given the scale of the lofty ambitions that the

department and its respective entities have, there is a

glaring mismatch between the budget and set targets. This

makes it even more pressing for the department to spend

wisely, to align its plans to the economic reality it faces

and for the political principals to lead by example in

upholding the highest level of financial probity.

Yet the amount of monies spent by the Ministry on items such

as travel, catering, and accommodation are an exhibition of

disregard for any financial prudence. This Ministry ranks

amongst one of the biggest spenders in the Cabinet on travel,

catering and accommodation. The total amount spent by the

offices of the Minister and Deputy Minister between May 2019

and March 2022 is almost quarter of a million, R248 309 86 on

catering. Deputy Minister, it is not sensationalized

reporting. These are figures that are contained in a reply to

parliamentary Question 846 which the department replied to.



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While officials in the department spent almost double that

amount by squandering approximately half a million, R490 672

85 on the catering for the same period under review. This

excessive wastage of public funds is even more worrying when

one reviews both the Ministry and department’s expenditure on

accommodation for the same period. The Minister’s expenditure

on accommodation amounted to R3,6 million while the Deputy

Minister’s expenses stood at just over R1 million

In comparison, accommodation expenses for officials in the

department in the same period were R10,7 million. These

exorbitant amounts are difficult to justify given that a large

portion of them were incurred during the Covid-19 pandemic

when most of the country was working from home. We understand

that the work of the Executive often requires spending a

number of days away from their official residences. However,

political principals must be more mindful that state resources

are not a ticket to endless junkets.

At a time when Treasury has been preaching the urgency of the

gospel of upholding austerity measures in government and when

everyone in society is tightening their belts to adjust to the

ever rising costs of living, there is no justification



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whatsoever for any Minister to be incurring millions on

catering and accommodation.

Hon Minister, please liaise with your Social Development

counterpart to reverse the senseless decision by the SA Post

Office, Sapo to no longer pay the R350 Social Relief of

Distress Grant, SRD at its branches. If you claim to have so

much unbridled confidence in the turnaround strategy of the SA

Post Office, then lead the charge in reinstating the payment

of the SRD grants immediately.

The insistence by the Post Office that its decision to stop

paying the social relief grant at its branches will help

alleviate long queues is an amateurish spin to gaslight poor

South Africans as the primary source of the entity’s gross

inefficiency. The long queues at Post Office branches are the

legacy of chronic inefficiency, shortage of staff, closure of

more offices and obsolete technological infrastructure and not

because of the beneficiaries of the social relief grants. The

hard truth is that the South Africa Post Office was broken by

the ANC-led government. And today we are asked to entertain

some fables about the turn-around strategy that will



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reposition the Post Office as a modern and profitable postal

and courier services.

From having one of widest footprints of service delivery in

the country with fully functional branches in some of the most

remote areas in the country, Post Office branches are

evaporating daily. A total of 248 Post Offices branches were

closed down between Jan 2018 and March 2022, thereby further

pushing poor South Africans into far-away branches outside

their communities to access their grants. The Post Office has

become one of the easiest targets of corruption cartels

operating in our country.

Since May 2020 when the Post office started paying the Social

Relief Grant, a total of 1 131 burglaries, 631 armed robberies

and 103 cases of vandalism occurred at Post Office branches

through the country. While there is no doubt a sizeable number

of honest and hardworking individuals working to serve the

public good at the Post office, far too many of its employees

are colluding with criminals to loot it to ground.

Few things illustrate this as vividly as the high number of

disciplinary cases against Post Office staff ranging from



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theft of grant monies to fraud. A total of 314 Post Office

employees have been suspended with pay at a cost of

R41 million in salaries since the 2020/21 financial year.

House chairperson, one of the largest contributors of

widespread corruption within the public service is that the

ANC, as a major beneficiary of state corruption, enables the

theft and misuse of public funds with its nonchalant attitude

towards its political leaders implicated in corruption.

The SABC’s strategic importance in society has previously been

hampered by squabbles between board members, infighting by

senior executives and tensions between Minister and the board.

While the current SABC board and management are making

relative operational progress in repositioning the public

broadcaster, the handling of the suspension and ultimate

dismissal of the former Head of News, Phathiswa Magopeni will

remain an indelible stain that will forever taint their term

of office.

We have one message to the SABC, please pursue and protect

your journalistic independence at all times. The public

broadcaster must resist all the undue pressure from the

executive to reduce it into becoming a glorified



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communications agency for the government. We are all aware

that this administration has an insatiable appetite to exert

its unholy grip on how the media reports on its service

delivery failures.

We congratulate the incoming Head of News, Moshoeshoe Monare

for his appointment and hope that he will uphold the

journalistic values that will enhance the SABC as the public

broadcaster that we can all be proud of. The fair and

consistent coverage of all political parties must not just be

the exception during elections. It must be a consistent norm

throughout whether or not there is an election.

Hon Minister, in your speech during the debate on state of the

nation address on February 2022, you exuberantly announced

that an allocation of 10GIG basic data would be made available

to every household. Yet, in a reply to a parliamentary

Question 431, you confessed without any specific irony that a

specific feasibility study relating to the latest 10GIG

programme has not been undertaken. Perhaps, this illustrates

perfectly the irony of this government. Huge on ever promising

and very low on delivery. I thank you, hon House Chairperson.



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Mr T T GUMBU: House Chair, hon members, Minister and the

Deputy Minister, fellow South Africans, the ANC has as far

back as 1969 at the consultative conference in the city of

Morogoro in Tanzania, affirmed that South Africa would have a

mixed economy. A mixed economy comprises a balance between the

private sector and public sector ownership of the productive

sectors of the economy.

In this regard, the developmental agenda of the ANC government

must be enhanced through state-owned entities, SOEs, in order

to ensure a dedicated, focused capacity of the state to

deliver effectively and efficiently. The ANC believes that

SOEs must be channelled towards the implementation of the

objectives of the democratic state. In his 2022 state of the

nation address, President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa implored

all of us to work together to address the challenges of

poverty, unemployment and inequality that blight our society

today. One of the ways we ought to do that is by restoring

trust and pride in our public institutions and developing them

to be self-sustainable as they execute their respective key

roles in the state. The government plays a critical role as a

shareholder and the executive authority. The ANC government is

always concerned with the agenda of the SOEs, their mandate



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and functionality. The challenge of weak leadership in both

executive and non-executive board members in the past was

persistent and undermined the critical roles of SOEs. Coupled

with this, the allegations of corruption in the SOEs have

posed a challenge. All of these challenges have been dealt

with and are in the process of being resolved.

Some political parties here in this House would like to give

an impression that nothing has been done by the ANC government

with regard to resolving the challenges faced by our SOEs.

Today I will tell you a story of how our government has worked

hard to improve the governance of SOEs and turned them around

so that they fulfil their development mandates. I want to

remind South Africans that it was the ANC members working with

members of other parties who led the Parliamentary Inquiry

into the SA Broadcasting Corporation, SABC, Eskom and the

Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, Prasa, to mention a

few, and we have also supported the work of the Zondo

Commission, the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, and various

forensic investigations. It is essential that corruption be

uprooted in all our SOEs. The legislatures in their oversight

must pay attention to the Auditor-General's report on

corruption and make the necessary follow-ups. The government



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has embarked on a thorough assessment of the entities under

this portfolio, to this effect, Broadband Infraco, BBI, and

Sentech have been merged. The State Information Technology

Agency, Sita, SABC, the SA Post Office, Sapo, and the Film and

Publications Board, FPB, are in the process of being

repositioned and repurposed. This is to ensure that their

mandates are in alignment with the developmental objectives of

the state for enhanced service delivery to our people.

The budget as a policy implementation tool plays a critical

role in this realisation. While the SABC has raised its

concerns in relation to the risk posed by the unfunded public

mandate on its financial sustainability and the concerns

around the declining audiences. The ANC commends the public

broadcaster for achieving 96% of its turnaround strategy

targets, and we also welcome the initiatives that the

broadcaster will be taking as a means to explore other revenue

opportunities through the introduction of its official

streaming and satellite services and seek to increase the

revenue generated from advertising.

We believe that Members of Parliament, as well as the

executive and the department, have an important role to play



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in ensuring that the corporation becomes self-sustainable. We

look forward to seeing increased revenue from sponsorship,

advertising, TV licenses, and the new over-the-top, OTT

platform. The work comes with the move of the SABC to launch

its own OTT platform which is expected in the second quarter

of the financial year 2022-2023. Revenue from the OTT platform

is expected to amount to R88 million for the 2023-2024

financial year. The OTT will total R471 million over the

Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. This is something to look

forward to.

South Africa’s broadcasting digital migration project is long

overdue. In 2006, South Africa and other countries in Europe,

the Middle East and Africa committed to meeting an

International Telecommunication Union deadline to switch over

to digital territorial television broadcasting by 2015. It is

imperative that we support the work of the department to

achieve a complete analogue switch off. This is important

because it will release the high-demand spectrum, which can be

used for the socioeconomic development of our country, as well

as bridge the digital divide that exists. The ANC, therefore,

supports the once-off allocation of R1,1 billion to achieve

this objective. It is indisputable that the SA Post Office



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plays a vital role in the lives of many South Africans. Not

only do we rely on it for our mail and postal services, but

the vast majority of our people are dependent on it to receive

their social grants. The post office has a footprint of 1 979

points across the country. The ANC supports the implementation

of the Post Office of Tomorrow Strategy for the realisation of

a renewed, modern and sustainable post office that is

technology-driven and has the support of strategic

partnerships in order to address the core challenges it faces.

Over the medium-term, the SA Post Office has been allocated

R1,6 billion for funding its public service mandate. While we

welcome this allocation, we are also alive to the reality that

Sapo is currently in a financial crisis. We call on the

National Treasury to seek innovative solutions to support our

post office. Equally, we would also like to call upon all

South Africans to take pride and protect their public

infrastructure. The vandalism and the robberies taking place

in some of our post office branches undermine directly the

results of our democratic gains. While we believe the Post

Office of Tomorrow Strategy provides a glimmer of hope to turn

the tide, we also understand the fact that, in its current

form, the post office was unable to adequately service the



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millions of Social Relief of Distress, SRD, or R350

beneficiaries. The ANC supports the other means of

disbursement they made available to ease the delivery of the

R350 grants to the post office, and we are of the view that

the proposed solution will be beneficial to everyone as is it

provides more options for our people to receive their money

from either Pick and Pay, Boxer, Shoprite, Checkers or Usave.

We further support that the SA Post Office commits to continue

to dispense the old age disability and the children’s grants.

In its 54th national conference, the ANC resolved that a state

bank shall be established in order to promote economic

development. The ANC also resolved that the Postbank should be

registered as a bank with the understanding that state banks

tend to give greater emphasis on employment creation,

empowerment, industrial diversification and development, small

businesses and co-operatives, small-scale agriculture,

microenterprises and local and regional economic development.

This would all be geared to the betterment of the lives of our

people. The ANC welcomes that the banking license for the post

office is in its final stages, and is now pending the

finalisation of the amendments to the Postbank Act. The



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ultimate passing of the Postbank Amendment Act will enable the

registration of the banking controlling company with the SA

Reserve Bank, and this is the final stage in the banking

license application process. The ANC supports Budget Vote 30 –

Communications.

*Tshivenda*: 18:28

Ndi a livhuwa. [I thank you]

*English*:

Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: Thank

you, hon House Chair. Let me start with the hon members of the

DA. Indeed, listening for understanding is not common to all

of us, and I am thankful that the committee is chaired by the

ANC who understand the legal principles of sub judice on

matters that deal with the court. I know that the majority or

cowards hide behind the general because the facts will not

support their hallucinations. We will await some members to

remove their heads from the clouds and come back to mother

earth and deal with the realities of our time.



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Hon Singh, we continue to work on our performance management

system and consequence management system, you will start to

see improvements on that – not only on the department but

across the entities. We want to thank hon members, except the

EFF for supporting resoundingly, the conclusion of the digital

migration programme that must be concluded with no further

delay. I hope those who have the powers to adjudicate on the

matter will also be listening. Indeed, hon Molala and hon

Maneli, we need to build capacity within the state and sector

education and training authority, Seta, to introduce new

technologies and emerging technologies. I am glad to report

that last year South Africa spearheaded the Artificial

Intelligence Blueprint for Africa through the Smart Africa

Alliance with contributions of academia, research institutions

and leading players.

This financial year we will launch the SA Artificial

Intelligence Hub in partnerships with academic institutions

and industry players. It is my honour to announce that the

catalytic projects of this SA Artificial Intelligence Hub will

include some of the applications that are registered on the

DigiTech platform, that I spoke about earlier. This work is



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part of department’s implementation of the recommendations of

the Presidential Commission on Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Hon Gumbu, we are glad that you raised the matter of the

Postbank. The success of the Postbank is to an extent

dependent on the viability of the SA Post Office, SAPO. The

Deputy Minister will detail the work we are undertaking to

implement the strategy for the Post Office of tomorrow and the

small achievements we are starting to register although the

road ahead remains challenging.

Access to funding is a major contributor to participation in

economic activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, South

Africans witnessed the reluctance of the commercial banks to

assist the poor and marginalised, both businesses and

individuals, to financially recover despite government

guarantees. In addition, banks including in South Africa have

played a catalytic role in the adoption of technology.

The Postbank as a state bank can therefore play a significant

role drive adoption of technology but also to extend banking

services in the terms that promote inclusion and banking for

all South Africans. We are working in a determined manner to



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ensure that the corporatisation of the Postbank is concluded

within the current financial year. However, to achieve this,

we will require the assistance of Parliament to prioritise the

finalisation of the Postbank Amendment Bill that is already

submitted for consideration.

In addition, we are working with the relevant authorities to

complete the appointment of the full complement of the

Postbank board in line with applicable Rules. We will also

complete the strategy and implementation plan for the Postbank

as a state bank. We are aware of the challenges of system

weaknesses facing the Postbank and are working with the board

to resolve them including holding those liable accountable. We

must appreciate the support of the Minister of Finance on the

work we are doing to ensure successful corporatisation of the

Postbank.

As I conclude, the work we do is not for us, it is an

investment for future generations. Therefore, we cannot aim

low, no matter how daunting the tasks and how big the

obstacles. The tasks at hand and those that lie ahead demands

that we remain resolute, focused, and intentional. We have the

calibre of people both in the department, our entities and



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sector emerge victorious on the other side. In any case, we

were raised to know that ...

*Tshivenda:*

... muntshimbidza vhusiku, ndi mutenda lotsha!

*Sepedi:*

Montshepetṧa bosego ke mo leboga bosele!

*Xitsonga:*

Munhu u fambaka na yena vusiku u nwi Khensa rixile.

*English:*

We will act well our part!

*Tshivenda:*

Ro livhuwa.

Debate concluded.

The mini-plenary session rose at 18:32.

