

29 March 2023

Ms NN Mapisa-Nqakula, MP
The Speaker of the National Assembly
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa
PO Box 15
Cape Town
8000

RE: PETITION DELIVERY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION, AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO ERADICATE PITLATRINES IN EASTERN CAPE, KZN AND LIMPOPO RURAL SCHOOLS.

Honourable Speaker

The purpose of this letter is to submit to the Hon. Speaker a petition of more than 5000 signatures calling on the Department of Basic Education and government to eradicate pit latrines (toilets) in rural schools in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo as a matter of urgency

Pit latrines have claimed lives of children in recent years, especially children. These inhumane, undignified, and death traps have left families an ordeal of heartache and deep emotional scars.

Eradication of these horrendous death traps would be in line with the South African Constitution which guarantees the right to life, dignity, safety, health, proper sanitation and conducive environment to education and also with the Polokwane High Courts ruling on 17 September 2021, the high court called for the eradication of pit toilets across South Africa and not just in Limpopo. Judge Gerrit Muller said that “the replacement of pit toilets is a national emergency and must be treated accordingly” and expressed his disappointment at the lack of urgency to dealing with this issue.

The United Democratic Movement started this petition through Change.org platform to safeguard and promote the rights and well-being of children in rural schools who would normally not have a voice and no one to stand up for them. With more than 5000 people having signed already, we are of the firm view that the people have spoken in numbers. And that the clarion call that was made years ago would be listened to by the government.

Parliament is an institution that holds the executive and the departments to account as mandated by the constitution and a representation of the people of South Africa, it is the right platform to make sure that the eradication of Pit latrines is a reality with urgency before the end of 2023.

The UDMs plea and all signatories is the Hon. Speaker to take the petition to Cabinet, relevant Parliamentary Committees and the Presidency for further discussions and immediate implementation.

Government needs to be proactive and decisive in eradicating pit latrines in our schools to protect our children and protect the future of our country from being to death by these horrific toilets

We look forward to a date as to when will the Hon Speaker will be available to accept the petition