### Address by (MP) Cde Bongani Bongo on the Budget Vote Debate of the Department of Home Affairs

10 July 2019

**Honorable Chairperson**

July is a very significant month in the history of our country, it marks the month of the birth of our struggle icon isithalandwe our father, hero, peacemaker, reconciler and the father of our nation Tata Mandela. Critically, July reminds us of the supreme sacrifices that Madiba and his generation made for our country in order for us to achieve peace, freedom, democracy and justice while reclaiming our dignity as a people. We can say without fear of contradiction that it is because of our liberation struggle has produced much of the value and lessons that is relevant to many people across the world. South Africa needs to draw on the same values and lessons as they speak directly to the challenges we confront in the country in general and the Department of Home Affairs in particular.

**Honorable Chairperson**

Under the Apartheid regime, with its Bantustan offspring, the main objective of the department of home affairs was to control black people and deny them their citizenship, identity, dignity and freedom of movement. The national democratic revolution (NDR) seeks to ensure that every South African, especially the poor experience an improving quality of life. It seeks to build a developmental state.

**Honorable Chairperson**

The ANC 54th National Conference in December 2017 deliberated on the state of Home Affairs as a key function of the State Conference raised its concerns over the presence of undocumented migrants in the Republic, which poses both an economic and security threat to the country; Conference went onto to site empirical evidence that the majority of asylum seekers do not qualify for refugee status and protection but are rather economic migrants.

It deliberated the challenges relating to legislation regulating access to citizenship by foreign nationals and acknowledged the initiative of the department had embarked on in modernization and development of a single national identity system, which is based on biometrics, to be also used as well in the Integrated Justice System to fight crime more effectively.

Conference clearly articulated the need to reconsider policy relating to centers for asylum seekers during consideration of their status; Concurrently the ANC recognized the perceptions that arise during this process and called for awareness programs to combat xenophobia and educate society against narrow nationalism; Conference welcomed the Stakeholder Forums of the Department as a demonstration of “the people” governing as per the Freedom Charter; It was the need for a single national identity system containing a profile of all South Africans and documented foreign nationals that has shaped the work of the Department that is reflected in the Budget Vote. The measure of progress in implementing ANC policy by government can be found in the detailed programs of the vote.

**Honorable Chairperson**

The mandate of Home Affairs has meant the transformation of Home Affairs into a modern, digital, secure custodian of national identity, responding to the present and future needs and circumstances, and run by professionals, operating in a highly secure environment to protect the records of the nation. The integration of Home Affairs into the security cluster has thus, paved a way towards the pursuit of this new vision that will see the department realigned and repositioned within the governance system. In line with the National Development Plan, Home Affairs makes four critical contributions to the nation, enabling economic development; contributing to national security; enabling effective service delivery; and supporting governance and administration.

However, its budget is relatively small taking into account the growing demand from citizens for the Department of Home Affairs services. The voted budget allocation for the 2019/20 financial year is R8.339 billion. In comparison with the 2018/19 adjusted allocation of R9.047 billion, in Rand value, it shows a nominal decrease of R707.7 million (but when the cost of inflation is taken into consideration, the budget shows a real decrease of R1.119 billion). It should be noted, however, that over the past five years (2014/15 – 2018/19), there has been a trend for the department of Home Affairs voted allocation to invariably be adjusted upward in the adjusted allocation during September.

Over the medium term, budgets have been declining in recent years. These pressures should be used to embark on a process of public service modernization that can substantially reduce the cost of doing business and increasing the quality of life through improving business processes and utilizing modern information and communication technology. This decline of expenditure on compensation of employees is in line with government commitment on remaining within the expenditure ceiling as part of our fiscal framework over the MTEF, Which will contribute to investment, economic growth, job creation and the reduction of inequalities.

**Honorable Chairperson**

Budget reductions will affect mainly non-essential items such as travel and subsistence, catering services, property payments, and contractors in the Administration, Citizen Affairs and Immigration Affairs programs. Budget increase will be for the establishment of a border management authority and the advance passenger processing system, which will enable airlines and shipping liners to send information to immigration officers according to passengers’ security and risk profiles; the management of the Represented Political Parties’ Fund; and transfers of R295 million in 2021/22 to the Electoral Commission for the local government elections in 2021. The Citizen Affairs programme remains the biggest of the three main programs in the department of Home Affairs, constituting 57 per cent of the overall departmental expenditure. This programme receives an allocation of R4.736 billion for 2019/20, compared to the allocation of R5.448 billion in 2018/19. This represent a nominal decrease of R711.9 million or 13.1 per cent (before cost of inflation). After cost of inflation, it represents a real decrease of R946.1 million or 17.36 per cent.

The Identification Services sub-programme receives a solid budget increase in both nominal and real terms. The budget share of this sub-programme shows a nominal increase of R72.2 million (or 29.58 per cent). Calculating for inflation, it shows a real increase of R56.5 million (or 23.18 per cent).

**Honorable Chairperson**

The department will be focusing on repositioning itself as a modern and secure organization; improving and expanding client interfaces and service delivery imperatives; establishing and operationalizing a border management authority; streamlining and securing international migration; and establishing public private partnerships in support of key infrastructure projects. The Home Affairs IT Modernization Programme is currently underway. It will radically improve service delivery levels, government and the private sector. This programme will introduce a paperless environment within the Department as well as live data capture, e-visa and permitting, the Trusted Traveler Programme, the Enhanced Electronic Control System, and the National Identification System (NIS) with biometric features, and the smart ID card.

**Honorable Chairperson**

In the context of 2019 being designated as the year of action by the President of the Republic of South Africa his excellency Cyril Ramaphosa in his State of the Nation Address highlighted that our highest priority this year will be on the introduction of a world class eVisa regime”. The implementation of an E-Visa regime by the Department of Home Affairs, which is at functional testing stage, expected to be implemented out in July 2019 and full production by early November 2019 is a serious enabler for tourism growth. This World Class Visa regime will provide for easy, efficient, yet secure access to the country for visitors. This system will enable tourists to apply for their visa’s online resulting to a quicker turnaround time on visa adjudication. This will bolster our tourism figures and create new Economic and Job opportunities for the Youth in particular.

**Honorable Chairperson**

In order to assist citizens register their children, Home Affairs has established service points in 221 hospitals where registration can take place. The Department of Home Affairs has worked tirelessly to narrow the stream of late registrations of birth, which were open to abuse and the fraudulent acquisition of South African identity and citizenship. Moreover, the department has improved its turnaround time and processes for the issuing of identity documents, passports and birth certificates. Furthermore, the Department of Home Affairs has moved with speed to strengthen the administration and control ports of entry ports. The Department has programs in partnership with law enforcement agents such as the hawks that continues to bare fruits, especially in waging a concerted fight against corruption.

**Honorable Chairperson**

The integrity of our National Population Register is at the heart of ensuring that all people in South are and feel safe. The National Population vulnerabilities are a matter of common concern due to factors such as late application for Identity Documents (IDs) and failure by some applicants to promptly collect their ID books. The single entry point into the National Population Register and registration of childbirths within 30 days. The cultural and customary challenges that face some parents are best dealt with through active participation in Stakeholder Forums. These forums deepen public participation in the provision of services and public goods. This includes the need to support the unabridged birth certificate process. It therefore encouraging that the department has embarked on a large-scale modernization programme that enables the state to provide services efficiently and securely.

**Honorable Chairperson**

Movement of people in and out of the country is inalienable to trade operations, economic growth and development. Immigration and border management continue to be critical to balancing security and development interests. The Border Management Agency should thus be strengthened and the department should play a crucial role in its strategies and operations to ensure that only the appropriately documented find their way into the country. In order to strengthen border control, the Border Management Authority that is to be established will assist in controlling and stopping illegal immigrants from getting into South Africa. The current system of having a multi-departmental control has its own challenges in terms of command and control. This agency, command and control will be from one center and therefore we believe that it will be more economical, efficient and above all, it will be effective.

The department should also strengthen its management of asylum seekers. There should be strict adherence to international conventions and protocols in processing of applications for asylum seekers and more should be done to limit fraudulent regularization of stay by asylum seekers especially by means of bogus marriages and/or procreation. With regards economic migrants the department must ensure the proper documentation and registration of economic migrants.

**Honorable Chairperson**

The performance of the two entities under the department is encouraging. Specific mention is made on the work of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) that has attracted both regional and international recognition in the form of awards received by the IEC, amongst these being the United Nations Public Service Awards in the category Preventing and Combating Corruption in Public Service.

Chairperson

Powerful dreams inspire powerful actions

We have a clear plan for the road ahead. We have a clear mandate. Now is the time for all of us to work together to implement it. Let us always remember what Proverbs 29:18 instructs: “Where there is no vision, our people Perish.

The ANC supports this Budget Vote

**I thank you.**