**Deputy President David Mabuza: The Presidency Dept Budget Vote 2019/20**

**17 Jul 2019**

**Address by Deputy President David Mabuza during The Presidency Budget Vote 1 Debate, National Assembly, Parliament**

Honourable Speaker,
His Excellency, the President of the Republic of South Africa,
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Honourable Members of the National Assembly,

On the eve of remembering what would have been Former President Mandela’s 101st birthday, we pause and take a moment to reflect on the legacy of his humanity and servant leadership.

His entire life embodied a selfless commitment to core values of freedom, dignity, human solidarity, and a relentless pursuit of struggles to change the lives of ordinary people for the better.

As this House engages with its day to day work, we must not go astray, but instead, seek to galvanise our collective leadership resolve and energies to tackle unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Tata Madiba’s life reminds us that we have a responsibility to free our people from the bondage and indignity of poverty. He said:
“Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings, and overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.”

Rising poverty and inequality continue to pose serious risks to global peace and stability. The United Nations 2019 global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) shows that 1.3 billion people are ‘multi-dimensionally poor’. The report notes that Sub-Saharan and South Asia account for the largest proportion of poor people.

As a country, we are confronted with high levels of poverty that require coordinated and decisive interventions.

What this suggests is that there should be a concerted and coordinated effort to address, not only income poverty, but other critical dimensions of poverty that include, among others, health outcomes, education  and skills, asset poverty, poor quality of work, crime, gender-based violence as well as  poor access to key basic services.

Poverty, inequality and deprivation engender deep-seated social fractures that undermine the goals of building a united and cohesive society.

We have come a long way since the birth of our democracy. This nation rose from the ashes of prejudice and racial polarization to forge a new national identity founded on equality, equitable access to opportunities for all and the respect for human rights.

We must continue to build a united nation that pursues common goals and aspirations for the benefit of all its citizens.

As we move forward, we must condemn those that promote race-based narratives intended to pull this nation apart. Incidents of racism and hate speech fuelled through social media platforms must be discouraged.

More importantly, our spatial planning and approach to integrated, sustainable human settlements must foster racial integration, and create decent and safe environments.

Women and children must walk freely with no fear of being raped and caught in the cross-fire of gang violence.

We must reject xenophobic attacks perpetrated against foreign nationals.

Our communities must unite and collaborate with law enforcement agencies to put an end to gender-based violence and murder of young children.

The Summit on Gender-based Violence and Femicide that was led by President Ramaphosa last year revealed that gender-based violence had reached unprecedented levels in recent times, and that more and more women were dying at the hands of their intimate partners.

This cannot be allowed to continue.

As the Presidency, we will work in close partnership with all our social partners to implement the declaration and resolutions which were the outcome of that Summit.

Our task of strengthening social cohesion, patriotism and a common sense of nationhood must be predicated on clear pro-poor policies and targeted anti-poverty interventions. Investment in the poor must focus on critical social infrastructure such as decent housing, water and sanitation, health facilities, schools and roads to enhance economic and social mobility.

As a country, we need to forge partnerships and deepen social compacts that will promote economic growth, inclusion and broad-based participation.

We must commend the President for driving a clear programme that mobilises all social partners in pursuing greater levels of investment to ensure that our economy is put on a sustainable growth path.

A growing economy will create employment opportunities and alleviate poverty and inequalities.

As part of our Anti-Poverty Programme, the Presidency will lead and coordinate government’s public employment programmes to create opportunities for training, employment and enterprise development.

Our anti-poverty interventions will also prioritize investment in the development and growth of township and rural economies.

Targeted enterprise development will be an important lever for accelerated empowerment of small businesses to ensure that they participate meaningfully in market value chains across all the key sectors of our economy.

Working with the Departments of Small Business Development and Trade and Industry, we will focus on targeted support for small businesses to build their capacity to manufacture and supply construction materials to government infrastructure and human settlements projects.

We need to promote the supply of locally manufactured materials to build schools, health facilities, roads and houses to ensure local SMMEs in townships and rural areas benefit from the roll out of projects in their areas. In this way, we will be able to deal with excessive concentration and monopolies in the construction sector value chains.

Our industrialization efforts through Special Economic Zones must provide incubation opportunities for small businesses and ensure that they are linked to markets both domestically and internationally.

Honourable Members,

Poverty and inequality are not only a consequence of historical injustices of the past, but the continuing skewed capital and land ownership patterns that  hamper broad based participation in economic productive activities.

The acceleration of our land reform programme will continue to focus on improving access to land for agriculture, economic development and sustainable human settlements. The release of government owned land will be prioritised to meet these developmental objectives.

In part, land restitution, redistribution and security of tenure, will not only address the negative legacy of dispossession, but unleash increased participation of new entrants to enhance agricultural production.

As government, we will streamline and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of post-settlement support to ensure that available resources deliver meaningful outcomes and impact.

We will work closely with established commercial farmers to leverage existing knowledge and expertise that will aid our land reform programme.

Given that the agricultural sector has the potential to broaden economic participation and mitigate the challenges of rural poverty, the productive capacity of communal land will be prioritised.

Working with traditional leaders, we will ensure that farmers in these communities are supported with requisite infrastructure, mechanisation and extension services to improve production.

To provide the required political leadership and institutional support for the success of our land reform programme, we thank the President for the re-constitution of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land Reform and Agriculture to speed up the implementation of land reform initiatives.

The IMC will be seized with overseeing the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the Land Reform Advisory Panel report. The Panel has completed its work and is awaiting to present the report to Cabinet.

Honourable Speaker

The President has assured this House on several occasions that our accelerated land reform programme will be pursued within a constitutionally-defined framework.

We hope that this august House will expeditiously conclude the processes leading to the amendment of Section 25 of the Constitution to unambiguously set out provisions of how the expropriation of land without compensation will be undertaken.

Honourable Members

At the heart of accelerated development, economic growth and inclusion is the adequate supply of relevant skills which are necessary for a modern, globally integrated and competitive economy such as ours.

The changing nature of work in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution presents shifting expectations for realignment of the skills sets required to support the digital economy.

What compounds our challenge as a country is that our bulging youth unemployment rate is as a result of low educational attainment levels, and a lack of industry specific skills among our youth.

The high number of young people aged 15-34 years, who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is a serious cause for concern. In partnership with industry players, we will work on finding solutions for this category of youth to ensure that they acquire skills that will enhance their participation in the labour market.

To respond to the challenge of skills shortages in critical areas of the economy, the Presidency will continue to champion the work of the Human Resource Development Council, a multi-stakeholder platform to forge collaborative partnerships in training and skills development.

Working with industry players, we will continue to implement targeted skills development initiatives to improve the supply pipeline of scarce and critical skills.

Honourable Speaker and Members

We are alive to the fact that, as we deal with the deficit of skills in the economy, we should accord equal attention to improving health outcomes, thereby ensuring that we have a healthy and productive workforce.

Our holistic response to the negative impact of HIV and Aids remains one of the key leadership responsibilities of the Presidency. The work of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) is the fulcrum on which broad based engagements and partnerships with the private sector, international partners and civil society continue to thrive.

Our global partners including the Global Fund, PEPFAR and UNAIDS must be commended for their valuable contribution to the successes we have achieved through our HIV and Aids programme.

Yesterday, I was privileged to officiate the launch of the 2019 UNAIDS Global Report in Eshowe, in KwaZulu-Natal. For us, the choice of South Africa as the launch country for this report is testament to the global recognition of our good work in responding to the HIV and Aids epidemic.

I am pleased to state that we have made noteworthy progress in leading our holistic fight against TB, HIV and Aids.

In this undertaking, we have mobilised partnerships with traditional leaders to play their critical role in this national endeavour. We are also working with provincial and local leadership structures through Provincial, District and Local Aids Councils.

The Premiers and mayors are playing a critical leadership role in mobilising social partners and communities to ensure that we succeed in our fight against HIV and Aids.
Furthermore, the 2017-2022 National Strategic Plan, remains a strategic blueprint to guide a coherent and integrated response to HIV and Aids. It will be rolled out and implemented through the provincial and district structures.

At the same time that we are dealing with HIV-TB treatment, our focus remains on prevention to ensure that many South Africans remain TB and HIV negative.

In saying this, there is acknowledgement that much work still remains to be done to stem the annual tide of new HIV and TB infections.

Honourable Speaker and Members,

The multi-party leadership collective constituting this august House has recently emerged from the May General Elections this year to represent the voices of the people who mandated all of us to be here.

The contestation among ourselves was not as important as the message and feedback that we received from ordinary people. Our people need us to improve on how we respond to their service delivery concerns.

There can be no doubt that that poverty levels correlate with challenges of service delivery in our local government institutions. The poor are bearing the brunt of inconsistent and interrupted access to services.

To respond to these challenges, CoGTA has identified, and packaged targeted support measures to help local government to perform better.

To complement these efforts, the President has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Service Delivery Response Interventions to lead and coordinate government’s work in areas plagued by service delivery challenges.

We will continue to build an efficient, effective and responsive local government system.

More importantly, we need to safeguard the integrity of governance systems to ensure that service delivery is enhanced, and public resources are utilized to benefit communities.

We will focus on strengthening political and administrative leadership capacities to ensure that issues raised by the Auditor-General are addressed.

We fully endorse the Auditor-General when he said recently that, “leadership sets the tone of any organisation. If an organisation’s leaders are unethical, have a disregard for governance, compliance and control, and are not committed to transparency and accountability, it will filter through to the lower levels of the organisation”.

In my role as Leader of Government Business, it is my sworn duty to ensure that there is implementation of the district-based approach, announced by the President, to speed up service delivery.

We will undertake to do this in the spirit of coordinated governance, working with relevant line function departments, like CoGTA, to ensure that municipalities are, indeed, adequately capacitated and resourced to fulfil their legislative mandate of service delivery.

Honourable Members

In closing, allow me to announce that our efforts to build a better and connected Africa are bearing tangible fruits.

For instance, in my role as the Special Envoy to South Sudan, we managed to hold various bilateral consultations working within the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Over the coming few weeks, we will coordinate various stakeholders involved in peace efforts in South Sudan, to come with a comprehensive response to accelerate the implementation of the provisions of the Revitalised Agreement.

These consultations are aimed at securing the implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement on South Sudan. Following months of intense negotiations, the new Revitalised Agreement has managed to secure the buy-in of most of the protagonists involved.

We are happy that the signatories to this Agreement are now working together to ensure that peace is realized and sustained.

As part of stabilizing the humanitarian crisis, preparations are under way for the delivery of South Africa’s humanitarian assistance package to the people of South Sudan.

We will continue to promote peace on the continent and ensure that intra-Africa trade is strengthened. More importantly, Africa’s people must live in peace, with no fear of war and violence.

I would like to end by extending my sincere appreciation to the State President, for his unwavering support and living example. To me, President Ramaphosa embodies Madiba’s sage counsel that, “A winner is a dreamer who never gives up”.

We will continue to support the work of this Government as led by the President. We will walk this journey together with you Mr President, in good times and in difficult times.

I thank you all.