**BUDGET VOTE DEBATE ON WOMEN, YOUTH AND PEOPLE LIVIING WITH DISABILITIES:**

1. Chairperson, it saddens me that I must stand here, and say what my comrades have said numerous times in this platform.
2. This is particularly painful because we now vote for an adjusted budget that is brought about as a result of the COVID pandemic.
3. Many people have lost their jobs, many women are at home with their abusive partners, or with their drug addicted sons who have been failed by society.
4. The greatest burden of poverty lies on the shoulders of women, and it is the very same women who have been practically ignored by not only the department, but by society as whole
5. Repeatedly, we have stood up here as the EFF, to hammer home the point that a truly caring government, a truly people centred government; will be the one that places the interests of the most vulnerable people at the pinnacle of its programmes.
6. Here we are today, once again rejecting a budget vote for a department that is woefully out of touch with the realities of the most marginalised, and the most brutalised. And these are women, youth and people living with disabilities
7. There is nothing of substance from this department that seeks to address the continuing marginalisation and exploitation of persons living with disabilities in this country. You have been blind to their suffering, and deaf to their cries for a very long time.
8. The frustration brought by the COVID pandemic is surely going to make matters worse for them. The unemployment, the difficulty with movement, the psychological trauma, and the shortage of support services from government will make the lives of people living with disabilities difficult.
9. At least 7.5% of the people of this country are living with one kind of disability or another. This disability is more prevalent among females compared to males, with 8,3% of females living with disabilities, compared to 6,5% of males.
10. We also know that the older people get, the more vulnerable they are to disabilities. More than half 53 % of persons aged 85+ are living with disabilities.
11. We cite these statistics to show you that we have a vast majority of our people who face daily struggles not catered for in this department’s operational plans. They have been silenced in society, and now, they have been silenced by the government.
12. Persons with disabilities continue to face numerous barriers to their full inclusion and participation in the life of their communities.
13. They have disproportionate levels of poverty, lack of access to education, health services, employment, and their under-representation in decision-making and political participation; compared to their able bodied counterparts.
14. This adjusted budget does not take these into account.
15. We need more focused interventions to protect people living with disabilities, and promote their social and economic interests.
16. We urgently need to:

1. We urgently need to ensure that all government buildings and facilities such as police stations, hospitals, clinics, schools and universities are accessible to people with disabilities.
2. Improve healthcare coverage and affordability for persons with disabilities as part of universal approaches to health care.
3. Train health care personnel on disability inclusion and improve service delivery for persons with disabilities.
4. Empower persons with disabilities to take control over their own health care decisions, on the basis of informed consent.
5. Prohibit discriminatory practices in health insurance and promote health insurance coverage for assistive devices and rehabilitation services.
6. We reject this budget