**Vote 34: Mineral Resources and Energy
Hon. Prof CT Msimang, MP**

Chairperson, South Africa remains home to the greatest mineral wealth in the world, estimated to be worth $2.5 trillion dollars, with the world's fifth-largest mining sector. We are truly a blessed country when it comes to mineral wealth, yet we continue to fail to take advantage of such blessings, with little or none of the wealth benefitting the country after it has been mined by foreign investors.

In fact, this has led to some economists stating that the vast mineral resources in many countries in Africa, despite such abundant supply, have proven to be a curse rather than a blessing, especially when looking at the associated economic instability and political division that follows in the wake of such industry.

This has indeed proven true in the case of South Africa!

Our mining sector requires greater oversight and scrutiny. ICT can assist government in not only creating a more effective licensing framework, but also provide greater ease of access to information in the sector.

Mine health and safety must be prioritised and the 12 performance targets set by the Mine Health and Safety Inspectorate Programme for this year, must be met.

Chairperson, in respect of energy, one can only but lament the state-run entity, Eskom. This state-owned power utility, which should supply 95% of the country’s energy requirements, remains an outright failure and an example of a mafia-run, state-sponsored patronage network. How long will this government allow this to continue? How long will it be before the lights go out indefinitely?

Put plainly, Eskom cannot meet demand. It remains the greatest systemic risk to our already challenged economy! It is an insolvent cesspool of corruption and is symbolic of this government's many failings to the citizens of South Africa.

Eskom must be dismantled and its stranglehold on energy supply redirected to entities structured as public/private partnerships.

Research and innovation should lead this energy supply reorientation, as we strive for sustainable and renewable sources of energy supply to meet our socio-economic requirements.

Our energy sector should also be looking at nuclear energy - while paying careful attention to costs, as well as ensuring that all procurement processes followed are transparent and above board. Further, our nuclear safety management must be brought in line with international best practice. Greater impetus must be placed upon the finalisation of the Governance Framework for the coordination of Nuclear New Build Programme and Multi-Purpose Reactor (MPR).

In conclusion, this Parliament, through its Committees and other mechanisms, should be the guardian of state resources: not for the profit of the few connected elites, but for the benefit of citizens.

However, through the majoritarianism of the ruling party, we are failing our people. The IFP calls upon this government to draw a line in the sand on corruption!

More specifically, we call upon the Department of Minerals and Energy to uphold its mandate in ensuring the transparent and efficient regulation of South Africa’s mineral resources and minerals industry, and the secure and sustainable provision of energy in support of socio-economic development.

SOEs that fall under this Department must be fervently monitored to ensure that they are aligned to achieve their developmental objectives, and to improve performance efficiency.

In the interests of South Africa and subject to above serious concerns, we support this Budget Vote.

I thank you.