**Speaking notes on the State of the Nation Address 2022 debate by the Minister of Police, General Bheki Cele (MP)
Monday, 14 February 2022 - Cape Town, Western Cape**

The Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon Nosiviwe Mapisa Ngqakula;

Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Hon Amos Mosondo;
His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa
Honourable Deputy President, Mr David Mabuza
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Ladies and gentlemen.

Good afternoon, Sanibonani, Molweni, Ndi masiari, i nhlekanhi, Dumelang, Goeie dag and Happy Valentines Day

Chairperson and Honourable members, allow me to anchor this debate by bringing in the wisdom of the father of our democracy, his excellency, the late President Nelson Mandela, where He says I quote “**Safety and security don't just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment.” He further goes on to say … “We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear.” –**end quote.

During the State of the Nation Address last week Thursday, his excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasized greatly on the fundamental importance of an integrated and progressive approach, to effective and efficient governance and the notion of collective consensus and public investment on matters of the safety and security of our country.

The President’s address elevated Economic Revolution and Safety and Security as the supporting Twin pillars towards Rebuilding the state and restoring trust and pride in public institutions.

Key to this is an aggressive approach to Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan that will address challenges birthed by the catastrophic COVID-19 pandemic and other related challenges of deep poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Chairperson and honourable members, in order to achieve any of the plans outlined in the SONA, our state of safety and security must be equal to the task. In this regard, we therefore re-commit to reposition our strategic focus of our safety and security machinery, to respond directly to the country’s priorities and furthermore create a safe and conducive environment in which the private sector can invest and unleash the dynamism of the economy.

Chairperson, allow me to reiterate and reaffirm our strong position as the security cluster, without fear of contradiction, that there is NO threat to the stability of this country.

I REPEAT, There is no threat to the stability of this country!

Some components of the Security services of this country may be limping but they are NOT DOWN and they are certainly NOT OUT!

The President stood in front of the nation last week, telling us about the damaging blows recently suffered by this country.

Could they have been prevented?  Maybe?

Could they have been worse, Certainly!

Could those tasked with safeguarding this country, done better, Of course yes!

Before we can fully appreciate how we got here, let us look back to where it started.

A systematic and deliberate erosion of the country's security apparatus over the years, has brought us to this point.

Mopping up a mess that was deliberately created to weaken the country’s security agencies and law enforcement, will take some time to clean up.

But, rest assured, the work has started and it will be done.

Honourable members,

Those criminals who were hell bent on seeing this country go under, during the July attempted insurrection, failed.

They failed because the police acted and did what they could in the most difficult of circumstances.

The failure to bring this country into turmoil MUST be attributed to the law enforcement agencies, who were confronted with a difficult situation, they were not fully able to prepare for.

The men and women in blue of this country, did all they could in the hardest of times.

Chairperson,

Our "security cluster" is functional,

This is why our prisons are full as we speak. Minister Lamola can attest to this. Those incarcerated criminals did not walk there on their own free will.

It is through the work of capable law enforcement officers that investigations were thorough, cases were presented in court and prosecutions took place to ensure lengthy sentences.

Since April 2021 to date, 196 GBV accused have been handed down 272 Life sentences.

**SERIAL RAPIST**

Through the work of the SAPS’s FCS unit investigating crimes againts women and children, In KZN, a suspect was arrested recently for allegedly raping 23 women, after being linked through DNA evidence collection.

The alleged serial rapist was caught after using one of his victims' cellphones. He is appearing in court today applying for bail, which will be opposed by the state.

**SPECIALISED AND FOCUSED POLICING**

Honourable Members, our state of policing will be specialized and refocused going forward, we have shifted gears in taking down organised crime syndicates trying to run a parallel government.

A national extortion team will be established and rolled out to the 9 Provinces that will focus on extortion at economic, construction sites and business premises. We are also decisively dealing with kidnapping syndicates, through specialized teams, especially in Gauteng where this crime is most prevalent.

An Extortion steering Committee based in the Western Cape is investigating robberies disguised as “protection fees” or “radical economic transformation” from extortionists.

We know this crime is a motive for a series of multiple shootings in areas such as Khayelitsha and Gugulethu. Investigations of the root cause of the multiple murders also assists in cracking some of these murder cases.

This committee will add on to the focused and coordinated response of specialized multidisciplinary units, announced by President Ramaphosa.

Moreover, an Illicit mining task team was established in Free State, North West and Gauteng. It will further be extended to Mpumalanga and Limpopo and the capacity of  all illicit mining task teams will be enhanced . It is envisaged that these teams will eventually evolve into specialised Units in the next two years.

Cash in Transit Task teams have been established countrywide and are instrumental in the prevention and investigation of Cash In Transit heists. The aim is to graduate these task teams into fully functional specialised Units
Anti-Gang Units have been established in Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Gauteng. These Units will be enhanced and reinforced in the 3 Provinces and Drug Units will also be strengthened.

The SAPS has also established specialised units to deal with organised crimes in  KZN, Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal.

The Gauteng and Western Cape provinces boast fully functional murder and robbery units.

Organised crime Investigation units are tackling murder and roberries as well as taxi violence in KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape.

 **POLITICAL TASK TEAM**

Another area of focus is Political killings.

The work of the KZN Task Team on Political Killings, speaks for itself.

From its establishment in 2018 to date, this team of detectives has made 289 arrests on politically related cases.

With an 83% conviction rate, without fear or favour, this Task Team has secured life sentences for 10 accused.

22 accused are currently serving sentences ranging from 10-50 years.

This Task Team will be extended to have a national footprint to deal with political killings.

Honourable Members, this IS prosecutorial Investigations at work!

This Task Team will be extended to have a national footprint to deal with political killings.

**RECRUITMENT**

Honourable members

We know that high levels of unemployment and drugs are pushing youths to turn to crime, but there is a call for communities to work with police and be part of the solution and overall fight against crime.

Following the negative impact COVID 19 has had on our recruitment program.

To this end, funds have been made available for this  administration to take unprecedented steps to capacitate the SAPS.

This means for the first time in its history, the SAPS will enlist 12 thousand youth within its ranks.

They will complete their training by the end of this year, bolstering the fight against crime and join the service.

We are calling on youths patriotic and passionate about serving this country, to take up this opportunity and apply to join the SAPS.

**POP RECRUITMENT**

Chairperson, the new blood of police recruits, will add to the SAPS on-going plans to re-capacitate the Public Order Police units which are currently at **5 856**.

 I am confident that the overall capacitation of the police service with the new blood, will re-energize this organization whilst at the same time, create employment.

The country’s Public Order Policing is currently standing at 5 thousand officers.

The POP Enhancement and capacitation process will result in four National Reserve Units and 50 provincial POP Units, 54 in total which will consist of over 12 000 members.

This is according to the Farlam Commission’s recommendations.

Chairperson,

Allow me to emphasize this point, that while we are embarking on this massive recruitment drive, The SAPS is attracting and recruiting excellence.

We want the best of what our communities have to offer and we will be putting in the most stringent conditions of recruitment, so that only the best join the service.

The SAPS will also be improving its recruitment processes to attract the best to improve the excellence of the police.

It is on that score that we are working on attracting hundreds of Bsc graduates, Accountants and other professionals to work in our specialized environments like Science laboratories and also form parts of the teams of the DPCI investigating organized crime and corruption cases.

**STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

In responding to the call of President Ramphosa, calling for the capacitation of Community Policing Forums,

Chairperson,

On this score, we continue to work closely with community safety departments in all our provinces, to ensure Community Police Forums (CPFs) are functional, efficient and up to the task.

To ensure its functionality, CPFs across the country are undergoing training programs in conjunction with the Wits Business School.

This program will empower members of the forum on being informed of the relevant legislative frameworks and their responsibilities.

Over and above this, SAPS continues to mobilize the community and civil society against crime.

·  Over 16000 community patrollers have been recruited as volunteers to assist the police and to intensify visibility on our streets.

·  Partnership with the private security industry has also seen the co-sharing of information, to maximise and enhance operational responses.

CPFs are by virtue of existence in the local municipality stakeholder that must participate in local Community Safety Forum engagements or meetings.

The other participants in the CSF are all JCPS cluster departments, other relevant departments in that municipality, business associations, traditional leadership, Faith Based Organisations.

The CSF does not replace a CPF, as both have different mandates in line with their own legislative mandates.

Some of Crime prevention concepts and collaborations include focused policing of Rural and Urban areas.

Specialized policing is a reality in schools and institutions of higher learning through collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

The SAPS is also engaging different institutions regarding the establishment of Victim Friendly Rooms for victims of sexual crimes and Gender based violence.

**DNA BACKLOG**

Chairperson,

Gender based Violence and Femicide remains our priority crime in the SAPS.

This administration has taken extraordinary measures to strictly implement its turn-around strategy to deal with the DNA backlogs. GBVF cases are being prioritised.

Through the Ministerial interventions in this environment, 17 critical contracts for DNA consumables have since been awarded.

Moreover, forensic laboratories have been capacitated with 19 interns to fill critical positions.

This increased human capacity building will ensure demands for the forensic case load are met.

40% of human resources are dedicated to addressing the backlog.

While 60% of human resources is dedicated for incoming cases.

Consumables and chemicals that stalled the processing of DNA are now in supply.

Forensic analysts from the KZN laboratories have since been moved to the Western Cape laboratory, to improve performance levels and production output of drugs and narcotics exhibits.

The construction of Eastern Cape laboratory is in progress and will be finalized in 2023.

 The relocation of the KZN laboratory is underway with the assistance of the Department of Public Works.

Chairperson

While improvements have been noted and the backlog has decreased from over 200 thousand in June last year to under 60 thousand in January this year.

In addition, the new cases of 159 996 accumulated, will be reduced between August 2022 to August 2023, if we follow through with the interventions in place.

We had given ourselves a deadline of 18 months to finalize the backlog, but with the interventions made, the backlog will be reduced in a much shorter time.

To make sure such backlogs at our laboratories never happen again.

 The SAPS is strengthening the internal controls and oversight on the functioning of Forensic Science Laboratories.

Amongst other interventions, an early warning system for effective response to system anomalies within this environment  has been developed.

**CONCLUSION**

Honourable Members,

We have pulled ourselves back from the brink of despair and improving the workings of the country’s security services is a non negotiable.

 Indeed, Safety and Security won't just happen,

 As Nelson Mandela has said, we owe it to the children of this country to live a life free of violence and fear.

This will take a lot of action and change, which will be accompanied by discomforts.

BUT ultimately, It has to be done.

It will be done.

I Thank you. Ngiyabonga.