# BUDGET DEBATE VOTE SPEECH – TRADE AND INDUSTRY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Spokesperson on Trade and Industry
& Economic Development.**

Delivered at Parliament in the National Assembly

11 July 2019

**Vote 34 & 25: Trade and Industry & Economic Development**

Honourable Chairperson,

Ministers,

The South African economy is at a standstill, mostly due to government instability and the lack of decisive leadership – to be quite frank.

There is undoubtedly a lot of work that needs to be done to overcome the many issues we have. The economy needs a major boost. Inequality is still a major stumbling block and we still rank number 1 with the highest Gini coefficient.

This year marks a quarter of a century after our first democratic elections. According to the World Economic Forum we were measured the world’s most unequal country then and we are unfortunately still the world’s most unequal society.

Equally as unfortunate is the fact that economic inequality remains largely based along the historical racial divide, worsened by intergenerational mobility that is relatively low and serves as a barrier to the reduction of inequality. We have a highly polarized labour market. On average, black South African households earn less than 20% of white South Africans’ earning.

Education, reskilling and jobs creation have a key part to play in South Africa’s future to ensure it closes racial and gender wage disparities and develops into a more competitive economy.

Chairperson, it is the direct mandate of these portfolios to promote the creation of decent employment through inclusive growth and it is high time that we see a performance outcome on those KPI’s. At the centre of the economic agenda the IFP envisions to see young people.

In order to generate economic growth in this regard we would like to urge government to see to it that its plans for education and skills development are met.

Another issue however is whether this department has the political will, over and above just debating this issue.

The IFP welcomes the newly signed African Free Trade Agreement. While many details still need to be finalized amongst the African nations, the tariff-free trade between them with be beneficial to all.

South Africa being one of the few industrialised countries on the continent, this agreement will create new export markets for our goods. Our businesses will be some of the main beneficiaries of the deal and in turn our economy.

Our Government should already have a detailed plan to take advantage of this new development to help boost our economy while working with other Africans.

We need to create jobs in South Africa, and the government desperately seems to be wanting to do this.

In conclusion, the IFP will support this budget vote, but only because we are optimistic about the future.

I thank you.