**BUDGET VOTE DEBATE ON WATER AND SANITATION:**

1. Chairperson, according to the World Health Organisation, to help minimise the chances of spreading the coronavirus, people must constantly wash their hands, and they must maintain reasonable physical distance from others.
2. This means they must also have access to reasonable basic services such as clean ablution facilities, have water in their yards to avoid contact with other people, and must have homes of reasonable sizes to keep their distance.
3. How is this possible in South Africa where there are more than 1.4 million households in human settlements that have no water, no electricity, and no dignified sanitation?
4. There has been general neglect on the need to improve human settlements, to ensure adequate provision of quality water resources, dignified sanitation, and service provision to every place where human beings reside.
5. The situation was dire even before COVID 19, it is worse now. It is so bad that this department had to scurry around, to deliver water tanks to over 2000 communities around the country.
6. How do you think these communities got their water before? Today, almost 12% of the households in these country do not have access to clean, piped water in their yards.
7. Over 50% of households do not have running water inside their homes, and 13 % depend on communal taps.
8. But the situation get worse when you zoom into particular communities. In Giyani, Limpopo for example, despite billions of rands spent in response to a drought that hit the area in 2010, the community still does not have reliable water supply. This is the reality of many communities around the country.
9. This is where your department should be focusing Minister. The fact that you were able to deliver water tanks to as many communities as you have, shows that the resolution of the water problems in this country lie in having political will.
10. It also requires political will to secure available water resources, to prevent wastage of this critical resource
11. It is common knowledge that South Africa is on the verge of a social and ecological precipice as a consequence on the inability of this regime to safeguard water resources in the country over the past 26 years.
12. The extent of the challenges facing sustainable water provision range from a mere inability of the State to invest in new water infrastructure and maintain existing infrastructure, to the obsession with rapacious, environmentally unfriendly development that has almost decimated our freshwater resources, as well as the reluctance of the state to enforce legislation to oblige industry, in particular, the mining industry, to prevent putting groundwater and freshwater resources, and to pay for rehabilitating water resources polluted by their operations.
13. The consequences of this neglect are too dire for the country. As far back as 2016, the country lost 1.1 trillion litres of water through leaks. That is over 3 billion litres of water a day, lost through government neglect.
14. In the City of Cape Town, which was experiencing sever water shortages at the time, over 44 billion litres of water was lost through leaks in one year, over 65% of all water lost in the province is through leaks. On top of this flagrant disregard for maintaining water infrastructure, the State has not invested significantly in building new infrastructure, including dams and attendant infrastructure that would ensure access to quality water for household and industrial development.
15. What this pandemic should have taught you is that we need to eradicate the bucket system as soon as possible.
16. We need each home to have its own sanitation system and connected to a sewerage system.
17. All schools should have flushing toilets.
18. There must not be a single household that does not have running water in this country.
19. You have let an opportunity brought about by the crisis to escape you.
20. We reject this budget vote.