**Debate on the 2022/23 budget: Vote 35: Science and Innovation**

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Honourable House Chair

The Freedom Front Plus can be counted on to condemn racist conduct by students or others. Experience has taught us to confirm the facts before we make statements.

A very unpopular person among members, I have noticed, is the imaginary “trust fund kid” – a phenomenon some members seem to think is found behind every bush in some communities.

The reality is of course very different, but it is easy indeed to dislike the beneficiary of someone else’s labour, who thinks highly of his or her own merit, without having demonstrated it.

When such an imaginary trust fund kid’s trust fund fails, the downfall might be rather brutal. Having perhaps not utilised the benefits to cultivate the knowledge, skills and attitude to benefit society, wealth may soon become a distant memory.

Therefore, it is not only necessary to cultivate one’s own abilities, but also to manage the fund to be feasible in the long run. Some consumption is justifiable, but reinvestment to keep the fund growing, is essential.

What would this have to do with the budget for science and innovation? The fact that it is one of those departments which actually invests in the future and future economies. Many other departments create trust fund kids, by expending money on people who did not contribute.

The state’s annual income is the trust fund. In theory, we are all beneficiaries when we are young, we all become contributors when we start working, and many of us become beneficiaries again when we are too old to work. This is besides benefits enjoyed by people of all ages and occupations.

It is only when there are not jobs for everyone, that some of us remain lifelong beneficiaries, without contributing. Although this is never to be recommended, a well-managed trust fund, or fiskus, may be able to deal with it.

Die doel van die departement van wetenskap en innovasie is om oorspronklike, vernuwende denke van ekonomiese belang te bevorder. Dit is ‘n omgewing waarbinne stagnasie nie beteken jy staan stil nie, maar dat jy agterraak.

Dit is dus ‘n departement wat voorkeur behoort te geniet, selfs as die voordele nie dadelik sigbaar is nie. Die vraag is of R9.1 miljard uit ‘n totale nie-rent besteding van R1,6 triljoen voldoende is.

Just to mention the entities within the department:
The Academy of Sciences of South Africa works with R35,5 million, the CSIR R3,46 billion, the HSRC R559 million, the NRF which also has to fund post-graduate students and various cutting edge projects R4,3 billion, SANSA, the space agency, R316 million and TIA, the Technology Innovation Agency which evaluates and funds technologically innovative and commercially viable enterprises gets R583 million. In comparison, the department of Small Business Enterprises, which finds it hard to demonstrate any positive results, receives R2,56 billion from parliament.

Wetenskap en innovasie word nogal goed bestuur. Daar is wel probleme, soos toe TIA die firma Kapa Biosystems heeltemal te goedkoop verkoop het; en die heining rondom die SKA se 131 000 wat SANParke in staat sal stel om die grond te bestuur, wat steeds net ‘n belofte is. Verder is kontinuïteit, wat so belangrik in ‘n kennisgedrewe ekonomie is, op die altaar van transformasie geoffer.

Dit befonds selfs ander departemente: Nagraadse studente is genoem; in Sutherland befonds dit ‘n wiskunde- en wetenskaponderwyser wat die Noord-Kaapse onderwysdepartement nie kan bekostig nie; en befondsing van energie alternatiewe is eintlik die taak van minerale hulpbronne en energie – as die visie net daar was!

Suid-Afrika het baie hulpbronne, maar ook deurslaggewende beperkings. Tegnologie en innovasie hou die sleutel om dit te oorkom. Gaan ons geld maar net gebruik tot dit op is en dan bedel? Of gaan ons belê wat nodig is om lewensvatbaar te wees? Volgens hierdie begroting, word die minimum belê, in die vertroue dat wetenskaplikes die wonderwerke wat nodig is, sal verrig.