



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES
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OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, HONOURABLE AMOS MASONDO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL WEEK PREPARATORY WORKSHOP

VENUE: HYBRID **DATE:** 6 SEPTEMBER 2023 **TIME:** 14H00

Programme Director, Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Honourable Sylvia Lucas

Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Honourable Thembi Nkadimeng

Minister of Water and Sanitation, Honourable Senzo Mchunu

Minister of Human Settlements, Honourable Mamoloko Kubayi

NCOP House Chairpersons, Honourable Winnie Ngwenya and Honourable Jomo Nyambi

NCOP Chief Whip, Honourable Seiso Mohai

Honourable Permanent and Special Delegates

Representatives of the South African Local Government Association

Ladies and gentlemen

1. INTRODUCTION

Programme Director, I appreciate the opportunity to make the opening remarks on this occasion of the Preparatory Workshop for the NCOP Provincial Week which is planned to take place from the 11th to the 15th of September, under the theme *Building Viable Provincial and Municipal Infrastructure for Effective Delivery of Services to Communities*.

The Constitution enjoins the NCOP to represent the provinces to ensure that provincial interests are taken into account in the national sphere of government. In carrying out this mandate, the NCOP is required to participate in the national legislative process and to provide a national forum for public consideration of issues affecting the provinces.

The Provincial Week programme is one of the mechanisms that the NCOP uses to carry out this important constitution injunction. The historical purpose of the Provincial Week programme has been to give Permanent Delegates an opportunity to return to their provinces, as delegations, to assess delivery of services to citizens. In this process, they deal directly with a range of matters that affect their provinces, thereby extracting those matters that are of interest to the provinces.

The last Provincial Week programme was held in March to April 2022 and it focused on *Assessing State Capacity to Respond to the Needs of Communities*. Next week's Provincial Week is a continuation of our

interrogation of the capacity of the state to serve our communities with a focus on the rollout of infrastructure.

2. ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Programme Director, in 2011 the National Planning Commission (NPC) found that the country's infrastructure was poorly located, inadequate and under-maintained. This was not a new revelation given the fact that the apartheid system had weaponised infrastructure to favour the development of communities in line with the government's policy of racial classification. This observation by the NPC informed the need to improve infrastructure for faster economic growth and higher employment, as well as to provide citizens with the means to improve their own lives and to boost their incomes. This is outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP).

According to the NDP, this would be achieved through public investment, at 10 percent of gross domestic product, which is financed through tariffs, public-private partnerships, taxes and loans and focused on transport, energy and water.

As part of its oversight work, the NCOP organised the Ministerial Briefing Session Infrastructure Development in September 2021 and the following are some of the issues that were highlighted by the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure:

1. Approval of the Infrastructure Investment Plan with 62 projects (human settlements, energy, transport, water and sanitation, digital infrastructure and agriculture and agro-processing sectors) from all three spheres of government, state-owned entities and the private sector in May 2020;
2. That the Ministry's infrastructure mandate was to promote coherence, better coordination and improved efficiency in government, facilitated by the Infrastructure Development Act;
3. That infrastructure projects were being prepared and packaged for investors by the Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), established in May 2020;
4. That a number of projects introduced as part of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan were already in construction;
5. She indicated that a Steering Committee was coordinating all Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) and brought together all roleplayers in government including the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the Municipal Infrastructure Agent and the Development Bank of SA;
6. She stated that an amount of R100 billion in Infrastructure Fund would be made available for seed funding over 10 years, as announced by the President of the Republic during the State of the Nation Address in 2020;
7. The launch of the Infrastructure Build Anti-Corruption Forum;
8. That government was developing a robust and comprehensive project pipeline to contribute to job creation and economic growth with provinces and municipalities, and;

9. That the National Infrastructure Plan 2050 identified projects for long-term needs.

On the other hand, the Select Committee on Transport, Public Service and Administration, Public Works and Infrastructure has followed up on the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment Plan and the SIPs. It identified that the construction industry is often held hostage by the so-called construction mafia. That estimates are that losses due to these disruptions amounted to R40.7 billion nationally in 2020.

The Select Committee has appealed to the Department to continue with its efforts to address risks that are posed by the groups of people who take advantage of the government's plan to build infrastructure. Such efforts should complement measures such as the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2019, which contains important provisions related to the safeguarding of critical infrastructure.

3. IN CONCLUSION

Programme Director, the NDP identified the need to improve infrastructure for faster economic growth and higher employment. The NCOP has over the years continued to assess the implementation of infrastructure plans and projects. In the coming week it will hold the Provincial Week programme to examine the role played by provinces and municipalities in setting up infrastructure for effective delivery of services to communities. We therefore welcome today's workshop to equip the public

representatives and all the participants with the information that is required to undertake this work.

I am looking forward to the engagement.

Thank you.