



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES
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**OPENING AND WELCOME REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, HONOURABLE N. A.
MASONDO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEMBERS' TRAINING
PROGRAMME**

DATE: 25 JANUARY 2022 **VENUE:** VIRTUAL **TIME:** 09H00

Greetings!!

The Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Honourable Sylvia Lucas

The House Chairperson for International Relations and Members' Support,
Honourable Winnie Ngwenya

The House Chairperson for Committees and Oversight, Honourable Jomo
Nyambi

The Chief Whip of the NCOP, Honourable Seiso Mohai

Honourable Delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

A great welcome to all of you, as we formally start our business for the 2022 parliamentary calendar. I hope that you all had the opportunity to recharge your batteries and are now looking forward to a fulfilling year.

Programme Director, the years 2020 and 2021 were uniquely difficult in that we had to contend with the devastating Covid-19 pandemic, the

consequences of which we are still dealing with. It impacted the lives and livelihoods of many people across the globe. But importantly, it taught us how to survive through adopting new approaches to our work in general and adapting to this specific pandemic in particular.

Indeed, early indications suggest that this year we may turn the corner in the battle against this pandemic.

Unfortunately, we entered 2022 on a very sad note. We had a devastating fire which gutted some buildings in the Parliamentary precinct. As we speak, the buildings of the National Assembly, the Old Assembly Chamber and some MPs' offices are the worst affected.

These affected buildings have a deep history which represents unparalleled heritage treasures for our country. They are a source of social unity and indeed cohesion.

However, in spite of this setback, the work of Parliament continues. And we have the past two years to thank for our resilience, occasioned by our transition to the virtual paradigm as a result of the national lockdown.

As per practice, we start the year with the implementation of a chapter in our capacity building programme. The aim is to facilitate continuous learning and sharing of experiences with a view to develop greater capacities for the work we do.

The National Development Plan makes the following assumptions which are supported by a body of leadership and management literature, that institutions improve:

- 1) Through continuous learning and incremental steps;
- 2) Through tackling the most serious problem, resolving it and moving to the next priority; and that,
- 3) Their success requires good management and leadership, a commitment to high performance, an uncompromising focus on ethics and a willingness to learn from experience.

Programme Director, both the Fifth and Sixth Parliaments have placed a high premium on ensuring that public representatives are empowered in order to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of Parliament. This is achievable, among other means, through the capacitation of Members and officials and the improvement of the overall support system.

Strategic knowledge-sharing initiatives are an important component of capacity-building for Members and officials of Parliament, and for enhanced parliamentary oversight and deeper scrutiny by public representatives. They form part of the institution's Knowledge Management Strategy.

The 6th Parliament's capacity-building exercise commenced with the orientation and induction programme for MPs, which was organised in June 2019. Over the years, this was followed by further interventions to enhance experiential learning of MPs.

Since then, the interventions have covered areas that are critical to the work of public representatives. These include the following:

- 1) Constitutional mandate and responsibilities;
- 2) Rules of debate;
- 3) Law-making;
- 4) Oversight;
- 5) Services offered by the Parliamentary Budget Office;
- 6) Members Facilities and Benefits;
- 7) Rules of debate in the era of virtual and hybrid sittings; and,
- 8) Motions

This year we are focusing, among other things, on:

- 1) The implications of amending the Rules of the NCOP;
- 2) Responsibilities of the Whippers;
- 3) Committee business; and,
- 4) The relational issues in the coordination of the business of the House and the programmes of the Provincial Legislatures.

This year's exercise is a further opportunity for the sharing of knowledge and information that sits in the people who drive the work of Parliament.

I therefore encourage Members to continue to indicate their areas of need and interest for purposes of the sharing of knowledge and information. The

House Chairperson responsible for Members' Support, Honourable Ngwenya, remains our dependable interlocutor and repository for all the needs and requirements of Members.

In order to provide more relevant and quality capacity development programmes, the Parliamentary Service will need:

- 1) To ensure that programme development is based on a continuous needs assessment, with input and feedback from stakeholders; and
- 2) To initiate processes to measure the usefulness of programmes through a regular satisfaction feedback.

Programme Director, if Parliament is to operate more efficiently and effectively, specific and needs-based capacity-building programmes are required to equip parliamentarians with the skills needed to perform their functions.

The past year saw the culmination of years of crafting a solution to respond in a sustainable manner to the need for ongoing capacity enhancement for Members and officials. This was through the launch of the Parliamentary Institute last month. The roles and functions of the institute are:

1. To design, develop and implement Capacity Building Programmes for Staff and Members;
2. To conduct quality research and provide up-to-date information to Members of Legislatures, and their Committees;

3. To provide advice and technical assistance to Committees and office bearers in legislative and policy related matters; and,
4. To establish and host an Alumni Association of the Legislative Sector (that is former MPs, MPLs and officials).

This is the first institute of its kind for our Legislative Sector. It is an important intervention given that it seeks to enhance the functioning of our legislatures. We are looking forward to further developments in relation to this initiative.

Programme Director, the task of improving the capacity of those who occupy the frontline in the service of the people is a response to our national and institutional imperatives. We hope to contribute to this great cause through ensuring continuous learning and sharing of knowledge and information.

With these few words, Programme Director, I would like to welcome all the participants to this year's Members' Training Programme and wish you a good start to the year.

Thank you!