

Monthly magazine of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

in session



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Praises at Parliament

Opening National House of Traditional Leaders





PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Mace of National Assembly

Vision Statement

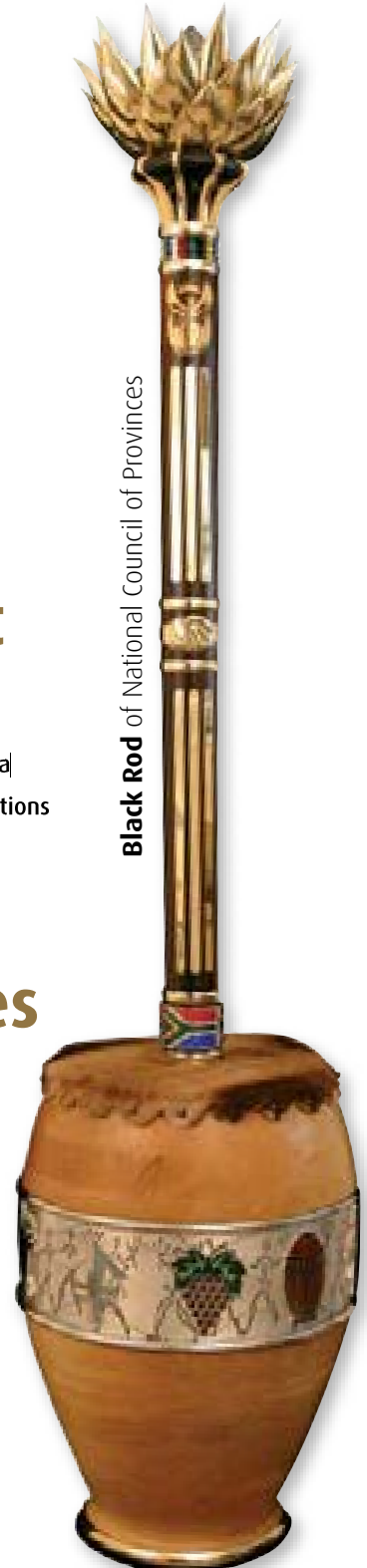
To build an effective people's Parliament that is responsive to the needs of the people and that is driven by the ideal of realising a better quality of life for all the people of South Africa.

Mission Statement

As the freely elected representatives of the people of South Africa, our Mission is to represent, and to act as a voice of the people, in fulfilling our Constitutional functions of passing laws and overseeing executive action.

Strategic Objectives

1. Strengthen oversight
2. Build a People's Parliament
3. Strengthen co-operative government
4. Improve international participation
5. Build an effective and efficient institution

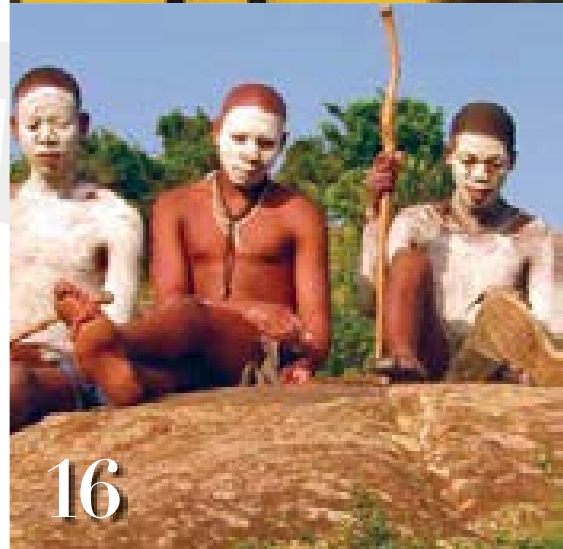


Black Rod of National Council of Provinces

contents

- 5** EDITOR'S **NOTE**
- 6** MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF **THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**
- 7** **BILL TRACKER**
Bills tabled in Parliament in February/March
- 8** 2014 **BUDGET**
- 10** DEBATE ON THE **STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS**
- 12** AUDITOR-GENERAL PRESENTS **ANNUAL AUDIT REPORTS WORKSHOP**
- 14** OFFICIAL OPENING OF **THE NATIONAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS**
- 16** INITIATION **BILL**
Select Committee debates the issues
- 18** **THROUGH THE LENS**
Opening of National House of Traditional Leaders in pictures
- 20** TOURISM CRUCIAL **FOR SA ECONOMY**
- 21** CLOSER TIES **FORGED WITH NORWAY**
- 22** SAA PRESENTS **TURNAROUND STRATEGY**
- 24** NATIONAL AIRLINE COMES **BEFORE SELECT COMMITTEE**
- 25** PARLIAMENT HOSTS **IRANIAN DELEGATION**
- 26** **MY STORY**
Dr Mario Oriani-Ambrosini
- 28** EASTERN CAPE FET COLLEGES **GET MIXED REPORTS**
- 30** **FUNDING FOR STUDENTS**
Portfolio Committee discusses the options
- 31** **ENGINEERING SKILLS IN SHORT SUPPLY**
Denel's Saturday School initiative fills the gap
- 32** RDP HOUSING **QUALITY QUESTIONED**
- 33** PROBLEMS AT **LABOUR CENTRES**
- 34** PUBLIC **EDUCATION OFFICE**
2014 budget
- 35** **KANTORO YA THUTO YA SETJHABA**
Kabo ya ditjhelete ya 2014

8



16



25

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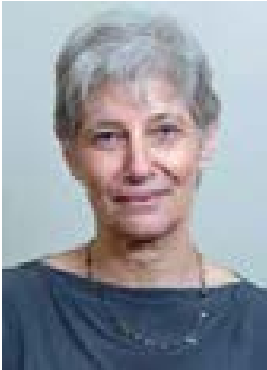
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editor's note



The *President's State of the Nation Address, like the Budget Speech that followed in March, is always accompanied by a suitable degree of fanfare in the commercial media, befitting events of this importance. The electronic and print media do a thorough job, featuring not only live broadcasts to millions of homes throughout the country, but also the fashions and colourful procession, which are part of the occasion and highlight citizen involvement in the event. The print media in particular provides news reports for the record, in-depth analysis and commentary. But the media's job is to move on to the next newsworthy story. That may be the last we hear of these important indicators of the state's achievements or failures of the past year, and its intentions for the year to come.*

It falls to magazines like *InSession* to take the long view. The State of the Nation Address does not end with the President's banquet. The real work begins when the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces debate what the President has told the nation. This February/March issue of *InSession* covers the debate (pages 10 and 11), when parties in Parliament had their say. Compliments and criticism greeted the President's speech and in the ensuing debate the political parties did not hold back, demanding accountability from the President. In his reply he conceded that more needed to be done in terms of service delivery. It is all part of exercising parliamentary oversight and it is treated as such in these pages.

The work of Parliament each year does not begin with the State of the Nation Address – by this time public hearings and committee meetings are well underway – and it intensified as the legislative programme rounded off with the rising of the fourth Parliament barely a month later. There was much to do before the end of the final session, marking the end of the first 20 years of democracy. The opening of the National House of Traditional Leaders gave President Jacob Zuma an opportunity to address the traditional leaders on the need for continued close cooperation with the government (pages 14 and 15).

Meanwhile, Parliament's presiding officers, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Max Sisulu, and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Mninwa Mahlangu, held a meeting with their counterpart, the President of the Norwegian Parliament (see page 21), affirming a relationship between two countries separated by thousands of kilometres but linked by a long history of support and cooperation, particularly during the struggle years. Days later, the presiding officers met the Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran and high profile members of the Iranian Parliament and the Executive (page 25).

Parliament's Committees have done their best to complete their work relating to the decisions and work of the fourth Parliament. We report on hearings by the Portfolio Committee of Public Enterprises, which heard of the latest plan to revive South African Airways and invigorate its transformation process (pages 22 to 24); a visit to the Eastern Cape's Further Education and Training colleges by the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training (pages 28 and 29) and the Portfolio Committee on Labour's visit to Eastern Cape Labour Centres (page 33).

Parliament's work does not come to an end with the rising of the fourth Parliament. Some legislation will be held over as part of the legacy of the fifth Parliament, to tackle along with its new programme.

We would love to hear your views on any of the stories we report on in this issue, or on any matter relating to Parliament that you wish to talk about. Please email me at insession@parliament.gov.za or write to *InSession* Magazine at PO Box 15, Cape Town, 8000. We will publish your email or letter in a forthcoming issue. 🌍

Enjoy the read!

Moira Levy
Editor



The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Mninwa Mahlangu

MESSAGE FROM THE national council of provinces

The fourth electoral mandate period of our democratic Parliament is coming to an end. As a country we are on the eve of a transition to the fifth Parliament through the national and provincial elections scheduled for 7 May this year. As we say farewell to one another, we must find time individually and collectively to reflect on the work we have done as this Parliament

We entered the fourth democratic Parliament with one mandate: to represent the people of South Africa and their interests. We are now exiting this Parliament, having done our bit to advance our democracy. Without doubt, we will go down in history as a generation that made serious and meaningful interventions to bolster the role and work of South Africa's democratic Parliament.

We exit the fourth Parliament having undertaken very important tasks. For example, we started with the implementation of the Oversight and Accountability Model, which was finalised in the third Parliament. We also established the Budget Office to ensure that Parliament has the necessary capacity for fiscal oversight (this was in furtherance of the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act of 2009).

We improved capacity to support committees and international relations work and made a big contribution to the creation of an open society in which people are able to engage directly with those who govern or to do so through their public representatives in Parliament about the challenges they face. We also finalised the development of the Public Participation Framework for Parliament and provincial legislatures as a written guideline to facilitate integration opportunities, along with minimum norms and standards for public participation within the legislative sector to improve alignment and practice.

These are some of the interventions we have made during the course of the fourth Parliament. I hope that you will agree with me that these, and others I have not mentioned, were significant in strengthening and guiding future parliaments. Importantly, we have laid the basis for the fostering of sound governance and effective service delivery by the executive.

We ended the term by looking at the restructuring of the parliamentary service so that it responds better to the needs of Members of Parliament. Part of this is the enhancement of the legal services of Parliament to improve the quality of the legislation we pass and to prepare for future capacity needs. The realisation by our people of the promise of a better quality of life is linked to the nature and quality of decision-making processes we make in Parliament and how these are conveyed through the legislation we pass.

We exit the fourth Parliament having laid the necessary reinforcements for building and sustaining a strong democratic culture. While it may have been difficult at times, the good thing is that we have finished the race. We are now bidding one another farewell, unfortunately having lost some of our dear colleagues along the way.

As we reflect on the achievements of the fourth Parliament, we must also not forget that we must locate these within the context of it being 20 years since our democratic Parliament came into being. It is important to celebrate a major step in the evolution of our democracy and an appropriate moment to reflect on the road we have travelled since 1994.

On behalf of the Presiding Officers I would like to thank the Members of Parliament and support officials for their great efforts in building this institution of the people. May we commit ourselves to do more for our country in the memory of our late first President of a democratic South Africa – Nelson Mandela. 🙏

The National Council of Provinces Chairperson, Mr Mninwa Mahlangu, delivered this address at the end of the fourth Parliament.

bill tracker

Bills tabled in Parliament in February/March

Bills can be introduced in the National Assembly or the National Council of Provinces. They are usually introduced by members of the Cabinet, but committees and members in their private capacity can also introduce Bills. The passage a Bill follows is influenced by whether it is classified as a Section 74, 75, 76 or 77 Bill, the latter known as a Money Bill. Depending on the circumstances, Bills can lapse and be introduced at a later date.

Medical Innovation Bill This Private Member's Bill, introduced by Member of Parliament Dr Mario Oriani-Ambrosini, seeks to make provision for innovation in medical treatment and to legalise the use of cannabinoids for medical purposes. Cannabinoids are extracted from the marijuana plant, or *dagga*, as it is known in South Africa.

The Bill seeks to codify existing best practices as to decisions by medical practitioners to innovate in cases where evidence-based treatment or management is not optimal or appropriate because the available evidence is insufficient or uncertain. The Bill also aims to encourage responsible innovation in medical treatment and management by supporting reasonable and logical clinical decisions to legalise the use of cannabinoids for medical purposes and for beneficial commercial and industrial uses thereof. (See *My Story*, pg 26)

Introduced by Dr Mario Oriani-Ambrosini
Enquiries: Ms Vuyokazi Majalamba
(Committee Secretary: Portfolio Committee on Health)
021 403 3770 / 083 709 8522

The National Water Amendment Bill
The Bill seeks to amend the National Water Act to make provision for the correct designation of the Department and Minister; to correct outdated references and provide for an alignment and integration of the process for

consideration of water-use licences, relating to prospecting, exploration, mining or production activities; to provide for the appointment of the Minister as the responsible authority for appeals relating to prospecting, exploration, mining or production activities; to amend the authority of the Water Tribunal as appeal authority relating to prospecting, exploration, mining or production activities; to provide for concurrence between the Minister, the Minister responsible for mineral resources and the Minister responsible for environmental affairs when amending provisions of the Agreement related to prospecting, exploration, mining or production activities.

Introduced by the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry
Enquiries: Ms Tyhileka Madubela
(Committee Secretary: Portfolio Committee on Water and Environmental Affairs)
021 403 3713 / 083 709 8401

The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) Amendment Bill
proposes amendments in order to enable the extension of the operations of the Bank to certain national territories on the African continent and its oceanic islands, to increase the authorised share capital of the Bank and enable further increases to provide for the application of certain legislation to the Bank and to adjust

the regulation-making powers of the Minister of Finance.

Currently, DBSA may operate in South Africa and the territories of all other member states of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Extending the bank's mandate will enable it to participate in large-scale infrastructure and other strategic projects on the African continent outside the SADC region which have the potential to enhance trade and economic growth on the continent and support South Africa's bi-national commissions and commitments to regional integration.

Introduced by the Minister of Finance
Enquiries: Mr Allen Wicomb (Committee Secretary: Standing Committee on Finance)
021 403 3759 / 083 412 1475

Financial Management of Parliament Amendment Bill The objectives of this Bill are to include a new section to make the Act applicable to provincial legislatures and amend the section relating to the oversight mechanism. It seeks to transfer the duty to submit financial statements to the Accounting Officer instead of the Executive Authority in order to streamline existing practices. The Bill will also amend sections relating to the tabling of the annual report by the Executive Authority and align sections relating to the auditing of the annual financial statements and the submission of the annual report to the Public Finance Management Act.

Introduced by the Standing Committee on Finance
Enquiries: Mr Allen Wicomb
(Committee Secretary: Standing Committee on Finance)
021 403 3759 / 083 412 1475 🌐



WANTED: 5% growth p.a.

Provinces, local authorities get more than half of Budget

The *Minister of Finance says a lot has been achieved in the past five years 'in a very difficult post-recession climate'. In his final Budget speech of the 4th Parliament Mr Pravin Gordhan reviewed progress made during 20 years of democracy in South Africa. Elijah Moholola reports.*

Mr Gordhan said despite the progress made, "there was more to do ahead, more to build, more to put right, more to learn, more to implement. Our plans for the period ahead are to accelerate growth, create work opportunities and build a more equal society. This is the resource plan for an intensified implementation of our National Development Plan (NDP)."

Providing an overview of the 2014 Budget, Mr Gordhan said the global economic outlook remained unsteady as while some advanced economies had returned to growth, others had continued to lag. "South Africa's economy has continued to grow, but more slowly than projected a year ago. A growth of 2.7% is expected this year."

Despite this, the 2013/14 budget deficit was projected to be 4% of gross domestic product (GDP), which was lower than predicted in October last year. The deficit would narrow to 2.8% of GDP over the medium term and the country's net debt would stabilise at about 45% of GDP in 2016/17.

Mr Gordhan explained that consolidated non-interest spending would amount to R1.1tr in 2014/15, growing to R1.3tr in 2016/17, an



MORE TO DO: Mr Pravin Gordhan delivers his budget speech in Parliament.

increase of about 2% a year. He also said that national government departments would get approximately 48% of available funds, provinces 43% and municipalities 9%.

Capital spending was the fastest-growing component of expenditure and was set to exceed inflation by over 4% a year, he said.

The Budget provided R9.3bn in income tax relief to households. Further benefits to households included the expansion of the government's employment programmes over the next three years and the continued support of job creation by the private sector; 216 000 houses would be built and 905 000 households connected to electricity over the medium-term

expenditure framework period; the increasing of child support grant recipients to 11.4 million; and the rebuilding of 433 schools.

Mr Gordhan said the current administration had started its tenure during the global economic meltdown, but had put measures in place to respond to the crisis in the past five years. Mr Gordhan said the impact of the global economic crisis included a collapse in commodity prices, sharp declines in international trade and a crisis in financial markets. Furthermore, the South African economy had contracted by 1.5% in 2009 resulting in the loss of nearly a million jobs, and government revenue in 2009/10 had fallen short of the budget target by R61bn.

But the economy had stabilised and recovery was assured through the implementation of an aggressive countercyclical fiscal adjustment. "When global trade went into reverse, we took steps to improve competitiveness of businesses within the framework of the Industrial Policy Action Plan. We accelerated infrastructure investment and expanded financial assistance to businesses in distress," Mr Gordhan said.

The government also expanded the Community Work Programme, while unemployment insurance and the expanding of the social grants programme provided increased income support to the most vulnerable. Mr Gordhan said that central to the NDP was a commitment to reduce poverty and inequality, and raise employment and investment. To quicken progress in creating jobs and reducing poverty, the economy had to grow at 5% or more a year.

To achieve this and establish a growth path that was inclusive and rapidly promoted black economic development, a wide range of initiatives were underway. These included accelerated public infrastructure investment; new spatial plans for cities; improved public transport and upgrading informal settlements; a tax incentive to encourage youth employment; further expansion of public works programmes; a renewed focus on accountability and quality in education; the phasing in of National Health Insurance; and steps to professionalise the public service and overhaul procurement and supply-chain management.

On government expenditure programmes, Mr Gordhan revealed

that more than R100bn was spent on employment programmes over the past five years, including municipal and provincial spending, with more than four million job opportunities funded over this time and six million job opportunities to be created over the next five years.

A total of R115bn was spent on higher education over the past five years, including R18.6bn on the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Allocations to the NSFAS amount to R19.4bn over the next three years, which would assist over 500 000 students a year.

Outlining the government's spending on HIV and Aids programmes, hospital and other health facility projects, and on social assistance, Mr Gordhan said that since the low point of the 2009 recession, employment had grown by 1.3 million but the unemployment rate of 24% was still far too high. Among the strategies for youth employment was the introduction of the youth employment tax incentive this year, which in its first month recorded 56 000 beneficiaries.

Mr Gordhan also announced increases in social assistance grants, which was projected to assist 16.5 million by 2016/17. Old age and disability grants would increase in April from R1 270 a month to R1 350, the foster care grant would increase from R800 to R830, and the child support grant would rise from R300 to R310 a month in April, and to R320 in October.

In education, Mr Gordhan said the number of learners with access to education had improved from five million in 2007 to 8.8 million in 2014, while Grade R enrolment increased from 544 000 in 2009 to 779 000 in 2014.

Through the Presidential Infrastructure Coordination Commission, progress had been made in overcoming infrastructure backlogs and investing for more inclusive growth and development. Public infrastructure investment would amount to R847bn over the next three years. An integrated city development grant had been introduced to strengthen long-term city planning and encourage private investment in urban development. It would amount to R814m over the medium term. Over the next three years, national government would allocate R105bn to municipalities for free basic water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal services, he said.

Special initiatives included the allocation of R3.7bn in conditional grants to municipalities. This included R857m for the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency and R276m for the human settlements Upgrading Support Programme in 53 municipalities. Mr Gordhan also announced a new grant of R300m a year to assist metropolitan municipalities in managing the human settlements function, and a further R180m as part of the human settlements development grant earmarked for settlement upgrading in mining towns.

Mr Gordhan said one of the main tax proposals for the 2014 Budget was that personal income tax relief would amount to R9.25bn. About 40% of this relief would go to South Africans earning below R250 000 per year.

Mr Gordhan said average income had grown by over 30% and more than 5.9 million jobs had been created since 1996. But while these were considerable achievements, they were not enough. 🇿🇦

Poor delivery equals protests

Focus on labour at State of Nation debate

Poor service delivery, violent protests, unemployment, crime and corruption were all raised by Members of the National Assembly as they commented on government performance over the past five years, during the debate on the State of the Nation Address. *Sakhile Mokoena reports.*

The leader of the Democratic Alliance, Ms Lindiwe Mazibuko, said joblessness was not just a statistic, but a cold and hard reality. "It is a reality for far too many South Africans, because our government does not have the courage to break the stranglehold that the African National Congress's alliance partners have on labour policy. Work opportunities and real jobs are not the same thing," she said in the debate on the State of the Nation Address.

The Expanded Public Works Programme was all very well, because work opportunities were important for poverty alleviation and basic skills transfer, "But real jobs are sustainable, private sector-oriented and rely on the government implementing good economic policies," she said. "People who protest against your government are certainly not happy with its service delivery record and are desperate for change. We cannot say that we are winning the war against crime when the latest crime statistics show increases in murder and attempted murder, as well as other serious contact crimes. This government needs a new and comprehensive plan to address it," she said.

Inkatha Freedom Party Leader Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi said strong nations were not built on promises

but on honest leadership. It was irresponsible to promise what could not be delivered, and then to have to hide failures under a thin veneer of sporadic successes. "Can we not hear the cry of our people, as they burn tyres, throw bricks and lose their lives in protests against the government? Are we deaf to the cry of the wounded, the helpless, and the sick? Promises raise expectations and when promises are broken, people protest. It is also not a case of 95% having access to water, which makes the other 5% impatient. Ask the people of Khutsong, or the people of Sebokeng, or the people of Bekkersdal. Their anger is real, and based on real problems," he said.

Mr Joe Mcgluwa of the Independent Democrats said the President had told the story of Transnet's new multiproduct pipeline. "But what he did not tell us was that work on the new pipeline began in 2008 and was initially budgeted at R9.5bn. It was meant to be complete by 2010, but was delayed until 2013, while costs more than doubled to R23.4bn. A review of the 'systemic failures' of this project was completed late last year, but until now no information has been available on the cost overruns of R14bn, and the delay of three years.

"The government has recovered more than R320m from perpetrators

through the National Anti-Corruption Hotline, but what of the R28bn that went down the drain last year alone? That's the bill for unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful spending by government departments and public entities," he said.

The leader of the United Democratic Movement, Mr Bantu Holomisa, condemned all violent service delivery protests. "In most protests, lawlessness is celebrated, as both private and public properties are destroyed. What adds fuel to the fire is that political leadership both at national and provincial level does not engage communities during protests: they rely on councillors and the police to extinguish the fire. We condemn the use of violence by all parties during protests," he said.

Mr Jacob Dikobo of the Azanian People's Organisation commended the government for ensuring that every child could access basic education and for increasing the budget of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). "There has been an increase in Grade R learners in the country. South Africa has nearly achieved the millennium development goal of universal access to basic education by 2015. The problem with our education system is quality. South Africa spends more money per capita on education than most countries at the same level of development, but has little to show for it.

"We also welcome the increase for NSFAS to R9bn. In reality though, many students face the prospect of being excluded because they



STOP: The leader of the official opposition in Parliament, Ms Lindiwe Mazibuko, responds to President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address.

are poor. The call for free tertiary education for the first qualification is not an unreasonable one if wastage of money can be stopped," Mr Dikobo said.

Mr Siphon Mfundisi of the United Christian Democratic Party said there were instances where service had improved, like in the Department of Home Affairs. "Applying for a passport and the new smart identity card and getting them in less than a fortnight is excellent. We hope other government institutions will follow. But is a social assistance programme covering 16 million people to be waved around as an achievement? To what extent are we building a nation that depends on handouts? While unemployment figures go through the roof, we give out grants. Surely a middle-of-the-road course has to be found?"

Freedom Front Plus Leader Dr Pieter Mulder called on the government to make it possible for the private sector to expand and create jobs. Currently, the government was interfering on

every level of the economy, while trade unions chased away investors. "The vehicle manufacturer Nissan gave four countries an opportunity to bid on manufacturing the new Datsun vehicle series. South Africa was the favourite, thousands would get jobs. But as a result of all the strikes South Africa did not get it, the contract was awarded to India. Similarly, the manufacturing of the new BMW was not awarded to South Africa, all of which means thousands of job opportunities were destroyed," he said.

The Congress of the People's Mr Mosiuoa Lekota said South Africa was less happy than when former president Mr Thabo Mbeki left office. "It is sad but the reasons are clear. When he left office this country owed virtually nobody. In less than five years, we are almost a trillion rand in debt," he said. He also mentioned that the former Auditor-General, Mr Terence Nombembe, had reported R20bn lost in "fruitless and futile" spending. "Had that R20bn not disappeared, our students would not

be running up and down the streets, getting arrested, insisting on money for education fees. Businessmen and women in our country are sitting with quantities of money, uncertain that if they invest it, they will get returns. They are not refusing to invest because they don't love their country, but because you have created huge uncertainty," he told the President.

President Jacob Zuma then replied to the debate. He agreed that more had to be done because some communities were still waiting to experience the change that had come to others. "We have progressed under difficult conditions in the past five years, since we came to office during a crippling recession. As a result of the economic crisis, government has accumulated more debt to support the economy, to increase infrastructure investment and to maintain social programmes. National debt is expected to reach 45% of gross domestic product in 2016/17 but this is relatively low compared to some developed and developing countries," he said. 🇿🇦

New broom, good job

Thumbs up from provinces for new A-G



NEW INSIGHT: Auditor-General Mr Thembekile Makwetu.

Hardly a month after taking over as the Auditor-General (A-G), the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) called on Mr Thembekile Makwetu to conduct a feed-back workshop on provincial departments' audit outcomes. After seven years as the Deputy Auditor-General, Mr Makwetu was able to respond with confidence, reports Abel Mputing.

"The audit outcomes have certainly improved. There are more unqualified audit outcomes than has been the case before, and more provincial departments are now getting their financial reporting right," Mr Makwetu told members of the NCOP in his first official address to them after taking over from Mr Terence Nombembe, who was the first African to hold the post of Auditor-General of South Africa.

More importantly, the audit outcomes could be used to gain public trust and, after the necessary analysis of problems, to attain clean audit outcomes, Mr Makwetu explained. "As the Auditor-General office, we want to be credible about clean

audit outcomes and ensure that government fights corruption, so that the office can gain public trust."

Members asked Mr Makwetu to brief them on the audit outcomes, the overall financial status, as well as trends and practices in provincial departments. He stressed the importance of oversight and accountability in guarding against the improper use of the public purse.

The aim of the workshop was summed up by the House Chairperson: Cooperative Government and Intergovernmental Relations, Ms Nosilivere Magadla, who said it was meant to welcome the newly appointed Auditor-General,

Mr Makwetu, and allow him to table before Parliament and members of the provincial legislatures, as well as the South African Local Government Association (Salga), the national and provincial audit outcomes for the year 2012/13.

"The workshop provided us with information and tools of analysis. As overseers of government, we must use these to meet our responsibility as stated in the Constitution. It means keeping a close watch on how the executive handles public funds," she said. The workshop had helped to provide insight on trends in the financial management of provincial departments, she added.

"The Auditor-General's report has provided new insights into the overall status of financial management in the national and provincial spheres of government, and public entities. Stakeholders can now share ideas, debate and discuss the report of the Auditor-General. In line with

the legislative and constitutional principles of co-operative government and inter-governmental relations, the workshop was also helpful in promoting a co-ordinated approach between the NCOP and provincial legislatures on matters of financial management, good governance, and accountability in the country's national and provincial Departments. The Office of the Auditor-General is intended to create a credible voice of reason, tasked with investigating performance and audit information," she said.

Public auditors enhance transparency and ensure accountability, which helps government improve its performance, fight corruption, promote public trust and promote the rights of the citizens, she added.

"To a legislative and oversight institution such as the NCOP, the audit reports of the Auditor-General are extremely helpful. This is especially so, given that they provide commentary on the effectiveness of key management processes and give feedback on compliance with laws and regulations," Ms Magadla said.

Ms Magadla was confident that the Auditor-General's report on provincial departments would find expression in the oversight work of the NCOP. Amongst other things, it would be a yardstick to measure efficiency and accountability in how public funds were dispensed and managed.

"A programme will be developed to take forward the resolutions and decisions of the workshop focussing especially on strengthening internal controls. That programme will involve all stakeholders in identifying challenges and seeking solutions. As the NCOP we will use the audit information in our oversight work

to encourage clean governance and administration. In working closely with provincial legislatures, we intend to create and strengthen collaboration on issues highlighted in the Auditor-General's report, especially where intervention is most needed," she said.

Departments were now in the position to detect their own problem areas or non-compliance with financial management regulations, which after several years pointed to much improved audit outcomes. "We had in fact expected the improvements that we see in this year's report and so the emerging trends are an improvement but not a surprise. We commit to working hard with the Office of the Auditor-General, by way of quarterly meetings to ensure that a much better picture emerges in the next round of audits.

"There is still room for improvement. And through a programme to be developed jointly by all stakeholders, we will address weaknesses using a best practice model from those departments, provinces and entities that are performing properly," Ms Magadla said.

Notably, the major challenge facing the management of public finances was the absence of stiff and standardised sanctions against those who break the rules of financial management and procedures. Ms Magadla said that the lack of effective sanctions was a matter of concern.

"The NCOP is concerned about the lack of sanction against those found to have transgressed rules and regulations governing the management of public finances. Members of the NCOP continuously raise this in their Committees when

they engage with government Departments and this is something we will be watching closely as we go about our business of effecting further improvements in the audit status of national and provincial departments including public entities. In our analysis of what needs to be done, I think our responsibility extends to citizens who trust us, to make a contribution towards a better South Africa in our role as Members of Parliament. This centres on dealing with audit reports and the Auditor-General's responsibility is to tell us what is going on in the administration of public funds."

Ms Magadla believes that ensuring the NCOP implements all the Auditor-General's recommendations is the way to entrench a culture of clean audits in municipalities and provincial departments. Finances should be handled by personnel with the right skills so that there is proper registration and keeping of financial records. This in turn will contribute to the enhancement of accountability and transparency in how provincial departments handle public funds.

"What we think here is simply to follow and implement all the recommendations by the office of the Auditor-General. But most importantly, we want to see institutions of government that are characterised by transparent financial management and reporting systems, among other things. We would be pleased to look back and recognise that there is a culture of financial management and performance-reporting, led and managed by public servants with strong technical skills and experience, and with the necessary capacity to manage finances of the State, with regular maintenance of records," Ms Magadla said. 🌟



WORKING TOGETHER: A young praise singer leads the procession at the opening of the National House of Traditional Leaders in Parliament.

Zuma praises traditional leaders

Chiefs concerned about traditional courts

South *Africa's traditional leaders remain crucial to the smooth running of the national democratic elections in rural areas, President Zuma said at the opening of the National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL). However, members of the Congress of Traditional Leaders were concerned about the future of the Traditional Courts Bill, reports Mava Lukani.*

Describing the historical role of traditional leaders during his annual address in Parliament to the NHTL, President Jacob Zuma said they never doubted their role in the struggle to make South Africa a better place to live. Traditional leaders were at the centre of the struggle against colonialism and apartheid, and they are now at the cutting edge in the reconstruction and transformation of the new free and democratic South Africa. Given the struggle role of

traditional leaders in the genesis of modern South Africa, it was fitting for the government to pay its respects to traditional leaders, the President stated. "Our country has changed for the better. South Africa is a much better place to live in than it was before 1994. And our traditional leaders have participated fully in building a free democratic society."

President Zuma praised the NHTL for its closer collaboration with

government, something he had called for in his 2013 address to them.

"I appreciate the participation and advisory role traditional leaders play in drafting municipalities' Integrated Development Plans. We welcome the partnership between the South African Police Services and the NHTL, which is intended to reduce crime levels.

"I am aware that the NHTL has participated actively in strategies aimed at fighting violence and crime in rural areas. Traditional leaders also participated in the development of the Rural Safety Strategy and the draft Community Policing Strategy, which contribute towards the reduction of violence and crime in our society," President Zuma said.

“Traditional leaders are at the centre in the lives of millions of South Africans who live in rural communities. They must support the electoral authorities to ensure that everything goes smoothly in various traditional authorities.”

He said the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, the National Prosecuting Authority and the NHTL had joined hands in developing the Safety Planning Programme for victims of domestic violence, which was launched last year.

During 2014, President Zuma announced, the government would refurbish the kings’ councils and 78 traditional councils located within the 23 districts that had been identified as requiring special infrastructure intervention. “The refurbishment will be done through the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency and the support will continue until 2019, at the end of the next term of government,” he said.

On the issue of land reform, President Zuma said the NHTL had requested some time ago that the government find ways to ensure that traditional leaders form part of the Land Management Commission, the Land Rights Management Board and the Rural Development Agency to ensure that they were able to influence decisions for the benefit of rural communities. He assured them that the government was going to speed up land reform. About R20bn had been spent since 2009 to acquire some 1.8 million hectares of land for restitution purposes. “Work continues to acquire more land and to improve the ownership patterns of land in our country to correct the historical injustice of the 1913 Natives’ Land Act.”

President Zuma said the passing of the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Bill in the National Assembly was a historic event. “The Bill will set in motion the reopening of the land restitution process. The Restitution of Land Rights Bill sets a new deadline for land claims until 31 December 2018, replacing the previous deadline of 31 December 1998,” he said.

Many of those who were excluded by the cut-off date now had a chance to reclaim their land, he said, urging traditional leaders to give land reform beneficiaries their maximum support. Traditional leaders should assist the government in communicating this historic development. “Please ensure that you assist people to find good lawyers to ensure that their claims are successful,” he said.

“Without sound legal assistance and advice, people’s land claims do not succeed. Although the majority of South Africans were told on a certain morning in 1913 that the land they inherited from their ancestors was no longer theirs but by law belonged to other people, they are now expected to present proof that the land belonged to them,” President Zuma said. This was “more than ridiculous” and traditional leaders should ensure the best lawyers were found to support land claimants.

President Zuma asked traditional leaders to rise above the tensions that sometimes existed between them and municipal councillors. He said these tendencies compromised the delivery of services to the people and presented an obstacle to a better life. “Whether you were born to lead or elected to lead, you exist to serve the people,” President Zuma said.

Asked by *InSession* for comment on President Zuma’s address, the Chairperson of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa), Kgoshi Setlamorago Thobejane (who is a Member of the National Assembly and the Chairperson of the Private Members’ Legislative Proposals Committee), said: “Contralesa agrees with President Zuma that the government has a ‘good story to tell’ given the progress it has achieved in the past 20 years, despite the legacy of apartheid. We are very happy with the manner in which the government drives transformation and the fact that the government leaves space for traditional leaders in all its spheres,” he added.

According to Kgoshi Thobejane the traditional leaders were very disappointed by the fact that President Zuma said nothing about the Traditional Courts Bill, which seemed to have been “thrown out through the window of the legislature,” Kgoshi Thobejane said. “We hoped the President was going to say something to us about that very important legislation. If he is silent about it in his speech, we don’t know where he is going to speak about it.”

The preamble of the Bill identifies the need for the transformation of the traditional justice system to align it with constitutional imperatives, including the right to human dignity, the advancement of human rights and the achievement of equality. Parliament has referred the Traditional Courts Bill back to the provinces for further consultation.

What role do you think traditional leaders should play in our society?
Email insession@parliament.gov.za and let us know. 🗣️

High death toll demands action

In view of the large number of deaths at initiation schools, it is high time challenges at initiation schools were dealt with says the Select Committee on Women, Children and People with Disabilities. *Elijah Moholola reports.*

Initiation schools operate throughout the country and the high death toll in 2013 should be enough to prompt Parliament into action, said members of the Select Committee on Women, Children and People with Disabilities. After hearing inputs from the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga provincial departments of health about the November/December 2013 initiation period, the Select Committee said that efforts to ensure challenges at initiation schools were dealt with would remain a high priority.

The Eastern Cape Department of Health reported that the death toll in the province rose from 40 in December 2012, to 48 during December 2013. The report stated that there were 42 396 legal and 707 illegal initiations in the Eastern Cape in the same period. The Department also reported 311 hospital admissions and nine amputations, while 21 arrests were made.

Committee Chairperson Ms Peace Mabe stressed that dealing with challenges at *ingoma* (initiation schools) and tackling the practice of *ukuthwala* (abducting young women as brides) were the Committee's main priorities. "Two focus areas as a Committee have been around the issues of *ukuthwala* and circumcision. We have dedicated our remaining time in office to ensure that we tie

the loose ends. Issues relating to women, children and people with disabilities are a 'by-the-way' issue until they happen to someone in your family," Ms Mabe said.

She added that it was disappointing that little had been done by the Eastern Cape government to address challenges. "It has been four years and I don't see any progress. We don't see initiatives from the government that are proactive rather than reactive. In one village, there were 48 deaths during the festive period. Last year it was 40. That's a lot (of young men)," Ms Mabe said.

The Committee called for legislation to be put in place as soon as possible. "I want the government to come forward. Without legislation, there is no way we can get it right," she said.

Ms Mabe also said that, before the fourth Parliament came to an end, the Committee would call on all provinces where circumcision took place to come to some agreement, so that by the end of June there could be legislation. "In June (after the next initiation period in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, where it is held every June and December), we do not want to hear of more deaths. We want to hear that the figures have gone down. It may still happen at times, but it must be kept to a minimum."

The Committee was concerned by the proliferation of illegal initiation schools in the Eastern Cape, which seemed to contribute to the death toll. "I don't understand why it should be difficult for the government to stop illegal schools from mushrooming. If it means this has to be stopped by sending *amaberete* (Police Service Task Teams) and soldiers, then it has to be done. But we don't want it to get to that," Ms Mabe said.

The Eastern Cape Department of Health's report disclosed that dehydration was the most common cause of death. In line with cultural beliefs, young men are not allowed to drink water for the first 10 days at initiation schools. Senior officials in the Department said that, after meetings with the House of Traditional Leaders, this practice was being changed.

OR Tambo and Alfred Nzo districts had the biggest problem with illegal schools, and most of the deaths occurred in these schools. The Department said that the province had set up monitoring teams to seek out illegal schools, which were reported to the police and shut down.

Another challenge was under-age boys being taken to initiation schools. The legal age for circumcision in the Eastern Cape is 18, but officials reported that in Pondoland boys as young as 12 had been taken. Another problem was that some boys went to the schools with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes. In Mpumalanga, 30 148 initiates attended the *ingoma* (initiation



rites of passage: The Select Committee slams the death toll at initiation schools.

schools) in 2013, and 31 of these boys died. Ms Mabe said it was encouraging to see that the authorities in the province had put measures in place to ensure minimal loss of life during initiation.

The Mpumalanga *ingoma* season, which takes place in a four-year cycle, begins in May and ends in July. In the last cycle there were 30 148 initiates, the highest number ever recorded. The next season is scheduled for 2017. In the 2009 season, there were an unprecedented number of deaths at initiation schools, and in response the province established a team to provide medical assistance, surveillance and support. In 2013, 134 traditional leaders were authorised to conduct initiation schools in the province.

Mpumalanga provincial officials said they had initiated an “Ingoma Bill”, which sought to regulate initiation

schools so that circumcision could be conducted within the prescripts of the law. Among other things, the Bill stipulated that young boys should volunteer to be circumcised at traditional schools, in order to curb the number of boys being abducted. It also set health and hygiene standards for the initiation schools.

There was also health screening for all registered initiates during which chronic conditions could be detected and treated in advance. The provincial Department of Health provided medication to such initiates for the duration of the initiation period. Furthermore, through the newly-launched Ingoma Forum, health practitioners who had undergone initiation were being deployed to assist at the initiation schools, with Emergency Medical Services on standby to assist.

The province also ensured that

forensic pathology services assisted with cause-of-death reports. If the need for prosecution arose, such reports would form part of the case of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), provincial officials informed the Committee.

“My only worry is that the Bill was tabled in 2010,” Ms Mabe said. “It’s almost five years now and it has not been passed yet. So where did it get stuck? Why is there such a hold up on this Bill becoming law? But at least you have attempted to legislate. You understand the importance of that. What is left now is implementation and putting in it into practice,” she said. 🙄

Email us at insession@parliament.gov.za and tell us what you think can be done about the deaths of young men at traditional initiation schools during the initiation period and the practice of *ukuthwala*.



Through the
lens



OPENING OF THE NATIONAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS

Members attending the opening in Parliament of the National House of Traditional Leaders, pictured with President Jacob Zuma and Deputy Minister of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs Mr Andries Nel.



BLACK AND WHITE: A feathered resident of the Penguin Colony Project at Betty's Bay near Cape Town.

Mr Gumede pointed out that “bad publicity also affects our country in the world tourism market. Stories of crime on Table Mountain affect tourism not only in Cape Town but also in Johannesburg, KwaZulu-Natal and the rest of the country. South Africa is competing in a competitive world for tourism revenue.”

All South Africans, black and white, had a responsibility to build the nation and make the country a better place to visit and live. He said the tourism sector needed to maximise its contribution to economic growth and ensure “resources from the public purse yielded maximum results”.

The projects visited included !Khwatttu on the West Coast near Darling and the Penguin Colony Project at Betty's Bay, both of which were funded by the Department of Tourism. !Khwatttu employs 22 people, 18 of whom are Khoisan, and trains about 15 young Khoisan people every year in tourism-related fields. Member of the Committee Ms Nomakhosazana Njobe said: “The Committee expected local people to gain skills once projects had been administered. Involvement with big projects such as this one should enable them to open their own business, with as little external involvement as possible. Sustainability of these projects should be such that if locals are given a chance to run them, they would do so without hiccups or failure.”

Committee Members cautioned that management of the projects should be done by local communities. Mr Gumede pleaded with stakeholders to ensure that the quality of the services offered guaranteed that tourists would return for more visits. “That would contribute to growth and also to rural development,” he said. 🌍

Focus on the positive

Bad vibes can ruin SA tourism

The *Portfolio Committee on Tourism visited some of the major tourism job creation projects in the Western Cape to assess their viability and contribution to the economy and after criss-crossing the province, they seemed satisfied with what they saw, reports Sibongile Maputi.*

The oversight visit was to assess the state of tourism in the province, the integration of tourism priorities in national, provincial and local spheres of government, and to assess the extent of grading and compliance by hospitality establishments.

The Committee Chairperson, Mr Don Gumede, said the visit sought to monitor if tourism was contributing to the priority areas of government such as job creation, social cohesion, and economic growth. “Tourism is instrumental in the creation of jobs. It contributes immensely to the gross domestic product. It is everyone’s

responsibility to build a strong and competitive South African economy. For the sake of our country, better working relations need to be crafted even with such stakeholders as the media. The industry needs to create jobs, and grow the economy,” Mr Gumede said.

The MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism in the Western Cape Province, Mr Allen Winde, had informed the Committee that bureaucracy hampered the registration of small, medium and macro enterprise (SMME) businesses in the sector.



CLOSER TIES: The President of the Norwegian Parliament, Mr Olemic Thommessen, and the Speaker of the South African National Assembly, Mr Max Sisulu.

Norway applauds 20 years of democracy

Norway *has been a democracy for 200 years and South Africa for only 20, but the two countries have much in common, including a desire for closer co-operation, despite the huge distance that separates them. Luzuko Jacobs reports.*

At meetings between the President of the Norwegian Parliament, Mr Olemic Thommessen, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Max Sisulu, and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Mzinwa Mahlangu, it was agreed that stronger contact and cooperation was needed between the peoples of South Africa and Norway, even though more than 11 000 kilometres separate Oslo and Cape Town.

The meetings were a first and celebrated friendship and solidarity between South Africa and a Scandinavian country that for many years backed the struggle for liberation in this country. The talks were marked by sombre reflection on the “unforgettable” passing of Mr Nelson Mandela late last year. The former President had visited Norway in 1999 and had been warmly welcomed by King Harald V.

Norway is an established first-world economy with a 200-year-old constitution but there are numerous similarities between the two democratic systems, including the

electoral lists system. Norway has established multimillion-rand trade relations with South Africa and is particularly strong in the energy, gas and oil, maritime and climate change industries.

While acknowledging the two countries’ long-standing relationship and cooperation, the three Presiding Officers agreed that contact between the people of the two countries could be improved. “We need to be more acquainted,” said Mr Thommessen, who attended the delivery of the 2014 Budget in the National Assembly by the Minister of Finance, Mr Pravin Gordhan.

The Presiding Officers agreed that creative and structured partnerships could be achieved through regular engagement, followed by concrete action for the benefit of both countries. Exchange programmes, skills transfer and closer working relations between committees of both Parliaments were singled out for urgent attention. Critical areas identified for cooperation also included the pharmaceuticals industry,

education, rural development and mining.

“South Africa is a vibrant, young, sometimes noisy democracy, with great potential. Our relationships with parliaments of the world are about learning, but also about offering lessons,” Mr Sisulu said.

In his reply, Mr Thommessen acknowledged democratic South Africa’s track record in the area of human rights and Mr Mandela’s personal contribution to the development of that record. “Our sense of solidarity with South Africans enables us to identify with your success. You achieved in your first 20 years of democracy what we could not achieve in our first 100,” he said.

“We consider this country to be a gateway to Africa. We have resources and expertise to contribute to the democratic development of the continent. We know that for us to succeed in doing this, we need to utilise this country’s lessons and advice in relation to Africa,” Mr Thommessen said.

Mr Mahlangu expressed optimism that, “the foundation in the form of historical collaboration and solidarity between the two countries could yield very good results for the benefit of the peoples of the two countries.” 🇳🇴



New plan for SAA

Strategy must 'restore national carrier'

Doubts *about the future of South African Airways (SAA) as it struggles to maintain profitability amid high fuel costs and a poor rand dollar exchange rate have plagued the company, but it is now making new attempts to regain its position as South Africa's flagship airline, reports Malatswa Molepo.*

There may be new wind beneath the wings of national carrier SAA, as it recently launched its latest long-term turn-around strategy (LTTS), but the process has been a hard one, leading many to call for the privatisation of the airline. This LTTS is the ninth in 13 years, as the company has tried to improve its balance sheet.

At a meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Public Enterprises, senior management of SAA and the SAA Board, during which the Committee was updated on the implementation of the latest LTTS, the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Peter Maluleka, said: "SAA

belongs to all South Africans and we must all work together to deal with the problems facing the company. We are encouraged by the slight progress since last September (when the Committee approved the LTTS), but more work needs to be done to ensure that the carrier moves from the current position of always begging for financial guarantees from government to being self-sufficient."

SAA management reported that progress achieved due to the latest LTTS interventions included a growth in revenue from R23.9bn in the 2011/12 financial year to R27.1bn for 2012/2013, a 14% improvement.

Operating costs in the same period fell from R1.25bn to R991m and SAA's low-cost subsidiary carrier, Mango, expanded its reach. Furthermore, SAA's decision to close the loss-making routes to Kigali in Rwanda and Buenos Aires in Argentina also had a positive impact on revenue growth. The financial report from SAA's other subsidiary, AirChefs, was also starting to show signs of stabilisation and improvement.

These achievements may seem small when considering the R5bn-guarantee the government had extended to the company for a number of years, but SAA's management told the Committee the financial report should be viewed from an international perspective, as SAA operated in a highly competitive international industry. "Some of the challenges the carrier faced were high fuel costs and the weakening rand against the



READY FOR TAKE-OFF: SAA recently launched a new turn-around strategy to make the company more profitable.

dollar,” SAA Chief Executive Officer Mr Monwabisi Kalawe said. “The average fuel price was at levels in excess of \$110 per barrel of Brent crude, which further eroded route profitability. While operating costs reflect a 12% year-on-year increase, fuel remains the single biggest cost to SAA, having increased to 35% of total operating costs. For the period under review, fuel costs increased by 15% to R1.3 bn.”

Mr Kalawe said the wide-body fleet the airline was currently operating was not fuel efficient, which led to higher fuel costs. “The planes we are using now were manufactured when the price of Brent crude was around \$40 per barrel. This has now increased to around \$110. Those planes are simply fuel guzzlers, as they were not manufactured with the limitation of fuel cost in mind,” Mr Kalawe emphasised.

However, the procurement of more fuel-efficient planes had been delayed, as the Minister of Public Enterprises, Mr Malusi Gigaba, had ordered SAA management to withdraw its tender for more fuel-efficient planes for long-haul routes. This was because the Minister was of the view that the request for proposals issued by the carrier (worth R60bn) did not contain “crucial elements of industrialisation and localisation for South Africa”. He did not want SAA to spend on items that had no long-term benefit for the country.

Members of the Committee said that although they were pleased with the reported improvements they needed a clear checklist against the set goals so they could assess if the LTTS was delivering real results. “When we meet next, we want to see a clear checklist of clear and measurable LTTS targets matched with progress so that

we can clearly see what is going on,” Mr Maluleka said.

This was welcomed by the SAA Board as it had already established an LTTS committee, which submitted regular progress reports. The Board also said that in 2014 SAA would focus on critical areas of business, such as the procurement process to replace the wide-body fleet, an aggressive revenue generation drive, cost compression, an Africa expansion strategy and a focus on customer service.

These measures would assist SAA to improve. “I can assure you that the next time we interact, we will have more answers and positive things to report. The management team and the Board are committed to making South Africans proud of our national carrier,” SAA Chairperson, Ms Duduzile Myeni, concluded. 🇿🇦

Too few female pilots, too few blacks

'We need transformation in the cockpit'



CHANGING PRIORITIES: SAA says 80% of its pilots are white males.

Twenty years of democracy has flown by without South African Airways (SAA) doing anything to ensure its demographics reflect this, according to members of the Select Committee on Labour and Public Enterprises, reports **Sibongile Maputi**.

Find black talent in aviation and appoint more women – quickly. This was the view of the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Labour and Public Enterprises, Ms Priscilla Themba. “This administration will not compromise gender representation and transformation,” she told senior management of SAA, who were at Parliament to set out the company’s long-term turnaround strategy.

SAA revealed that 80% of its pilots were still white males. Chief Executive Officer Mr Monwabisi Kalawe said the airline had introduced a cadet school where it hoped to speed up transformation. “The cadet school prioritises black talent, but that has hit a snag. An Afrikaner civil rights organisation, Solidarity, is contesting the cadet school’s intake policy and is claiming the policy is prejudiced against white men,” he said.

“Surely there has to be a way of making all people aware of opportunities in the

aviation industry? The airline should target people in rural areas. This is a national airline and it should reflect the demographics of the country,” Ms Themba insisted.

Mr Kalawe told the Committee that SAA was also searching for black instructors to teach pilots. “It would be nice to have these kids taught by people who understand their daily challenges and what they might, or might not, have covered in the school curriculum,” he said. “The cadet initiative met with resistance from those who do not want transformation and there is currently a case pending with the South African Human Rights Commission.”

Members of the Committee did not believe that 20 years after democracy a national carrier should still be struggling to transform its pilot crews. They interrogated the challenges to transformation and cautioned SAA management that failure to transform aviation would reflect badly on the country.

Committee Member Mr Mtikeni Sibande said SAA should improve on recruitment and spread its focus to all the provinces rather than concentrate on urban centres. “Why is recruitment concentrated on Johannesburg, Western Cape and Durban?” he asked. “The focus should also be on black children in the far-flung villages. I come from

Mpumalanga while other members come from other provinces. You should spread your recruitment. Make sure that once recruitment is in place, the intake represents a good geographical spread. SAA should strive to balance things,” he said.

Mr Kalawe explained that all the airline’s international routes were making a loss and, had it not been for SAA’s low-cost airline, Mango, SAA would have been liquidated. Guarantees from the government were not helpful, he said, as this was tantamount to borrowing from a bank and interest on those loans placed the airline deeper in debt.

The Chairperson of SAA, Ms Duduzile Myeni, told the Committee that aviation skills were rare and not easy to find in South Africa. “In the rest of Africa, people are conveyed by black pilots. It would be nice if SAA could fill the vacant post of Chief Airline Controller with a black person.”

SAA outlined interventions to give access to a more diverse group of people. For example, the required number of flying hours for trainees to qualify would be reduced from 1 500 to 250 and black flight instructors would be recruited. “The airline would not want to put people’s lives at risk just to meet transformation targets. We will at all times adhere to the highest safety standards,” Ms Myeni said. 🇿🇦

Global spotlight on Iran & SA

Parliament hosts solidarity visit

A high-level parliamentary delegation, led by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Max Sisulu, and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Mzinwa Mahlangu, has reaffirmed “a shared commitment to develop an even closer relationship between the two Parliaments” with their Iranian counterparts.



Mr Mzinwa Mahlangu and Mr Max Sisulu welcome the Iranian delegation.

The Iranian delegation, on an official visit led by the Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr Ali Ardashir Larijani, comprised members of the Iranian Parliament and the Executive. Their visit follows an official visit in 2010 by the Speaker of the National Assembly Mr Max Sisulu to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

During discussions, the two delegations paid tribute to South Africa's first democratically elected President, Mr Nelson Mandela, and acknowledged the irreplaceable gap his passing left in the world.

They also discussed issues of international solidarity and cooperation, economic development, nuclear energy, terrorism and the values that should underpin contemporary international relations in the world.

Opening the discussion, Mr Sisulu highlighted the world-view shared between the two countries – making the world a better place for all, not just for some. “This is especially true of the developing countries,” he said. Mr Sisulu, reflecting on his 2010 official visit to the Speaker of the Parliament of Iran, expressed admiration for the resilience

of the Iranians. “What we witnessed in your beautiful country was amazing. We saw people in action, working hard in all sectors of the economy for socio-economic progress. We were encouraged by the determination of a dedicated nation working under really difficult circumstances and against great international pressure to uplift their country. We brought with us a lot of lessons from that experience,” Mr Sisulu recalled.

He urged members of the delegations to build on the foundation laid during the 2010 visit and to exchange views on a range of topics, including transport, science and technology, energy and housing.

Mr Mahlangu highlighted the role of parliaments in exercising oversight of international agreements and he acknowledged the important role of Iran in the Middle East.

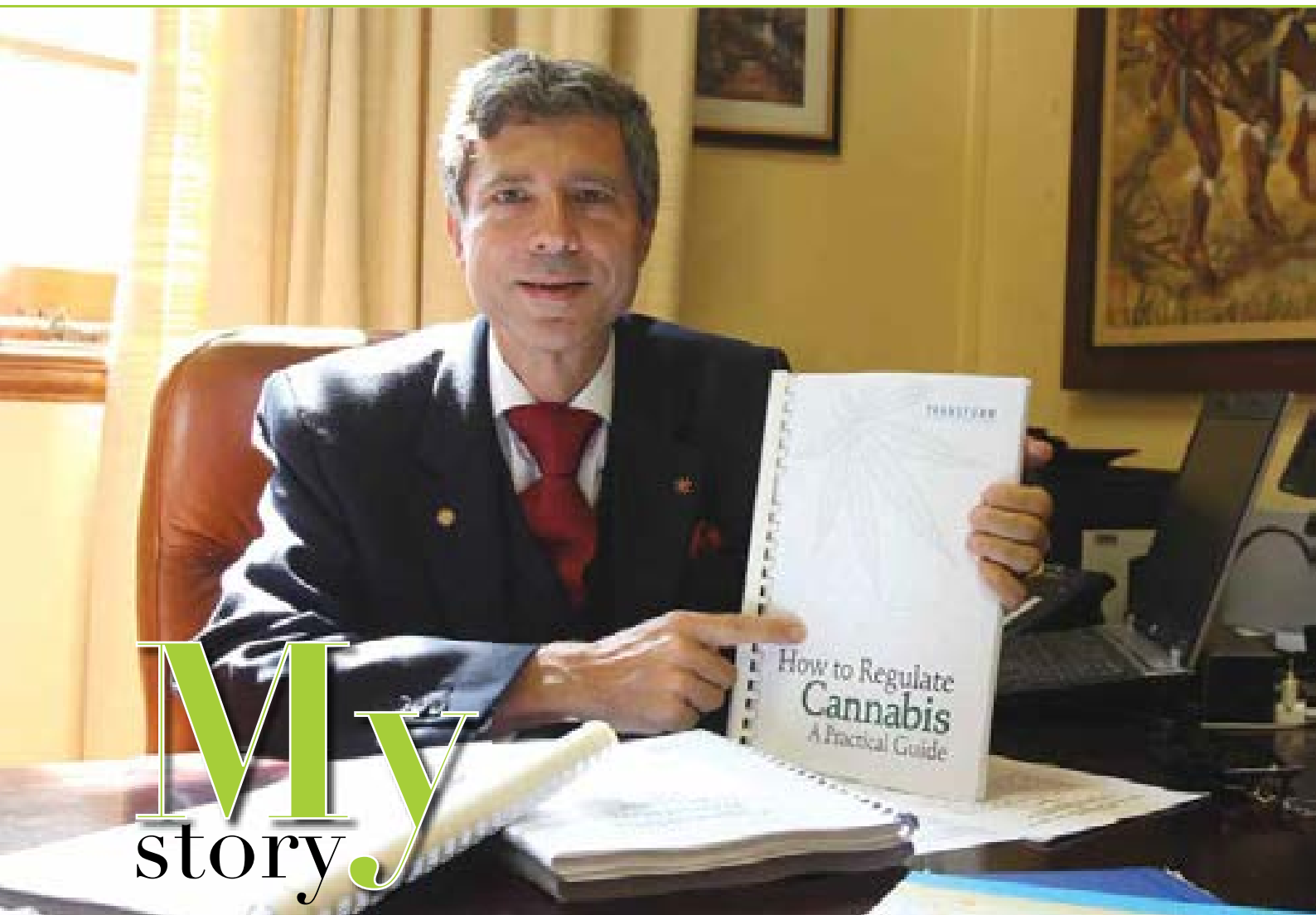
Dr Larijani said his country considered South Africa “an important friend with which we would like to consult on political and international matters.

“On the economic front, more immediate steps are required to strengthen our relations. We are ready to cooperate with South Africa on oil and gas production. We acknowledge your country's strength in science. We need to enter into joint ventures in these and related industries. We must do joint ventures in mining. This is a very good time for South African business people to visit to explore possibilities,” he said.

Iran reserved the right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful use, not for weapons, and Iran's programme to develop uranium was closely supervised to ensure that it complied with this peaceful intent, Dr Larijani said.

Since 2009, when the fourth democratic Parliament was established, there have been 18 exchange visits between Parliament and the national legislatures of other countries.

The meeting with the Speaker of the Parliament of Iran followed a bilateral exchange the previous week with the President of the Grand Assembly of the Norwegian Parliament (see page 21). 🌐



My story

The politician who has been described as the “the bull terrier” of the Trade and Industry Portfolio Committee had been confined to a hospital bed for six months and given a short time to live, but his fighting spirit still beats strongly, as **Sibongile Maputi** discovered.

The gallant parliamentarian endured a tortuous cancer, a malignant mesothelioma, which no amount of medication could cure. Then Dr Mario Oriani-Ambrosini was told about the possibilities of a cannabis extract. In his own words, “After living clean all my life, here I was championing the cause of dagga. Such is life.”

Late one Friday afternoon, Dr Oriani-Ambrosini told *InSession* of his “dagga proposal”, which he made as a passionate plea to the President in a speech in the National Assembly the day before.

On the podium, he said “I was supposed to die many months ago. I am here because I had the courage to seek alternatives, (first) in Italy in the

form of bicarbonate of soda and here in South Africa in the form of cannabis, marijuana, *dagga*.”

This led to him drafting a Bill, “which is not only about medical marijuana,” he says. “It is about making all sorts of treatment available to cancer patients. There is nothing illegal about herbs or bicarbonate of soda. The treatment is varied; bicarbonate of soda is also not authorised as a treatment. Cannabis itself is deemed to be illegal. There is no reason whatsoever for that to be the case.

“Why is it illegal? There is not a single recorded case of someone who has died of marijuana. How many people have died of alcohol and tobacco abuse? This is a medicine that helps.

I would not be talking here today if it were not for the marijuana extract. I took it in the form of oil; you don’t need to smoke it. The oil is called THC (tetrahydrocannabinol). A typical course of treatment last for four months, depending on the condition of an individual,” he said.

“The oil is taken in different ways. There are people who administer it orally, but that has a psychoactive element and it can cause side-effects. I hate being affected this way. I can take the pain, but I cannot take the separation between me and my brain. I have resorted to the rectal method – one gram three or four times a day. It has no impact on my brain whatsoever. It goes straight into the bloodstream without affecting the brain.”

Dr Oriani-Ambrosini said in South Africa one could not get the product and doctors could not prescribe it. In the US, where it is legal, another product called Cannabidiol is basically the same oil without the psychoactive component.



Dr Oriani-Ambrosini described his hospital stay as a living hell. He missed his work, and will continue with it for as long as his physical condition allows.

“I was away (in Italy) for six months in a small room, confined to a bed, and all I wanted was to come back to my life, to get back to my work. My work has been my life. I think I emerged as a stronger man and, if you live through this journey, it humbles one but it also gave me the strength to recognise that we really are the masters of our fate. It also makes one realise that you are just a man, nothing more and nothing less.

“My own realisation is that in this frail core (the body) there are linked strengths and linked weaknesses. The strength lies in its union, which is greater than (the parts of the) man himself. Any human being who confines himself to individuality, to his own needs, has not fulfilled the full measure of being human. Being human is not about oneself, but about all of humankind,” Dr Oriani-Ambrosini said.

“I am lucky that there are different treatment options for me, and I have access to different doctors as well as enough money to pay for my own treatment. Some others have no voice, no hope. They depend on the system that processes them like cattle in abattoirs, and could only afford death following on terrible suffering.”

“I’ve seen hell on earth in the chemotherapy wards, where people are plugged into machines, surrounded by families without hope. Amid the pain and despair, there must be something better to address this pandemic. One person in three could get cancer. It rates as the disease of the millennium; the greatest threat to humankind. When 10 million people die from cancer

every year, that’s a higher number of casualties than in any conflict situation, including World War I,” he said.

“Mine is not just lung cancer. If it was, it would have been easy to treat. I also have malignant mesothelioma, which has advanced metastases and covers my entire pleura. This is a big problem. This is stage four: lung cancer would have been simpler. This is the worst type of cancer and very severe. It has the highest morbidity rate. It inevitably kills you and kills you fast. I am already in the 0.01% survival group and I may not make it. I’ve stayed a few days, and now a few months, in the jaws of death.

“That makes life worth living. I’m still angry because this cancer might start all over again. I don’t have much time left. It gives me very little tolerance for nonsense. Time is precious. Time is the only finite quantity. Everything else you can stretch, but you cannot get more time.

“I told my leader – Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi – that I am available, subject to my physical condition. If I feel that I am not doing enough to justify earning my salary, I will resign. This would not be my decision but that of the party. I am a fighter; I will die on the horse. One should not die in bed. You should do so while still on your horse,” he said.

Dr Oriani-Ambrosini concluded with these words: “Make sure that death catches you while you are still alive. We are all going to die. It does not matter when, but it matters how. And don’t try to die while you are still alive.” 🍌

What do you think about legalising extractions from the *dagga* plant for medicinal use? Let us know by emailing insession@parliament.gov.za

However, it does eliminate the possible use of a number of other drugs, which is possibly the reason it is not allowed.

“People take cannabis for epilepsy. As opposed to taking the daily dose of 60 pills to control epilepsy, they have stopped the pills and opted for smoking cannabis. This resulted in a huge loss to the pharmaceutical industry, but nature has its remedies. All the statistics with my type of cancer indicate chemotherapy has zero impact,” he said.

“My treatment also involves bicarbonate of soda, Vestro (a fruit extract), and a special nutritional programme. Vestro is an extract of fruit, for example, but a doctor cannot prescribe it in South Africa. For medicine to be used for human consumption, one has to follow long and costly clinical trials. The government should consider creating a regulatory framework where, in specialised hospitals under the Minister of Health, the country could make these treatments available.”



VITAL SKILLS: The administration of FET colleges and the quality of teaching is under review.

Mixed report on Eastern Cape colleges

The biggest challenges facing Further Education and Training (FET) colleges in the Eastern Cape at the start of the new financial year are an increasing demand for bursaries and poor financial control at some colleges, reports Abel Mputing.

It was clear that all was not right at FET colleges in the Eastern Cape, judging by a visit of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training to eight FET colleges in the province. This was the view of the Committee Chairperson, Mr Ishmael Malale, after the Committee conducted an oversight visit to assess the academic culture at the colleges and monitor their progress on governance and administration.

The principal of Buffalo City FET College, Mr Dharamchand Singh, told the Committee that the College was on a sound financial footing because it had incorporated risk management in its governance strategy. "This has resulted in unqualified audit reports,

thanks to our hotline to report fraud and corruption. However, the demand for bursaries exceeds our capacity and this has led to student unrest. It doesn't help that the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is slow to pay claims and is susceptible to abuse and corruption."

Mr Singh outlined how the college planned to improve student attendance and academic learning. "Learning will be monitored through a learner attendance policy. The college also intends to introduce a supplementary instruction programme. This will be done by identifying top learners to assist in peer teaching and then monitoring their efforts."

The King Hintsa FET College's current management, under the stewardship of principal Mr Jomo Jacobs, has had to start from scratch in building a credible administration, as the previous one was riddled with financial irregularities. Mr Jacobs said the college was moving towards restoring efficient governance.

"I have filled critical positions to ensure that the college performs its duties optimally. As a result there is now human resource management, supply chain management, student support management and skills development components, plus a placement officer, an academic board, and audit and risk committees that were not there before."

Mr Jacobs has also ensured that the irregularities besetting the college are investigated to bring those responsible to book. "Criminal charges have been referred to the

South African Police Service and, as a result, five staff members have been suspended," he said.

The Committee learnt that Ingwe FET College in Mt Frere had major management challenges that had led to adverse audit reports and it had been placed under administration. Its academic performance also left much to be desired. The principal, Ms Noluthando Balfour, told the Committee that its most pressing problem was that they had too few lecturers and those they had were often unqualified. "The College has a high vacancy rate. It has no senior lecturers and a high drop-out rate. We have also noted a deficiency when it comes to lecturers' understanding of subject content, which has affected the institution's academic outcomes," she said.

Eastern Cape Midlands College was able to share some good news with the Committee, as last year it had an 86% pass rate and scored 874 distinctions in the National Certificate (Vocational) exams. However, this success has led to a reduction in funding, as the principal, Mr Jamangile Mbana, explained: "We are now the victim of our own success, because our annual funding share does not cater for all our deserving students. Last year, 24% of students were unfunded, and we had to carry their costs."

Mr Mbana credited the college's success to an occupational training programme, which taught welding skills, small business financial management and "new venture" creation. These had become their flagship programmes but, "there is no long-term funding for this programme. In the past financial year, we got R152m to teach practical skills to many young students. This

programme directly contributes to skills development," he said.

The acting principal of Port Elizabeth FET College, Mr Leon Beech, said FET funding norms were outdated. "FET funding does not cater for student residences and, without dedicated capital project funding, many FET campuses become dilapidated," he said. The Committee was told that the Ministry had since committed R2.5bn for infrastructure development.

"NSFAS has no clear break-down of funding in relation to students needs," Mr Beech continued. "Students have to wait until the end of the year to know whether they qualify. This has had a negative impact on students' morale, because of uncertainty about whether they will continue with their studies or not. We believe that the absence of NSFAS branches in all provinces makes it difficult for it to have an interface with students and clarify how students get funded and why."

It also emerged that many students were making fraudulent claims in a bid to secure NSFAS funds. The acting CEO of Lovedale FET College, Mr Pierre Laubscher, said the number of needy students had more than doubled. "Previously, 45 and 50% of our students classified as needy but now we are standing at 99% because students submit fraudulent documents and certificates in a bid to get NSFAS funds. This irregularity was picked up in internal investigations. To curb it, we gave amnesty to students who were involved in this irregularity, if they owned up. Those who did not come forward have been handed over to the police," he said.

NFSAS Chief Information Officer, Ms Xolisa Peter, said she thought the proposed NSFAS pilot project centralising the disbursement of

funding would help curb fraud.

"We are now going to use the South African Receiver of Revenue Service, Home Affairs and household information to verify the students' claims. We think it will help in authenticating claims and ensuring that only needy students get bursaries," she said.

The Department of Higher Education and Training stipulates that students who achieve over 40% qualify for bursaries, but this far outstripped the R30m bursary grant it provided annually to FETs. "The Department's stipulation does not state what the student qualifies for. We think the bursaries should cover all aspects, including tuition, accommodation and transport, but the latter are currently not catered for," Ms Peter said.

Organised labour and student bodies from various FETs were concerned about salary disparities, performance management, communication between the employer and employees, inconsistent organograms, and lack of proper representation on FET boards and decision-making bodies. Labour representatives felt that FET governing councils should be monitored to ensure they were empowered to enhance academic standards.

In his closing remarks, Mr Malale said the Committee was disturbed that three FET colleges had not submitted their financial reports. "Heads must roll," Mr Malale declared. "Why should we keep the heads of these institutions if they cannot do their work? As a committee, we will ensure that there is public accountability in this regard," he said. 🗣️

Do you receive NSFAS funds? Tell us about your experiences with NSFAS at insession@parliament.gov.za

Student funding abused

'Not solution to everything'

The *abuse of government financial aid to students has reached 'grossly unacceptable proportions', as Kim Barlow reports.*

"We know that there are students who wait at bookshops and buy books for strangers in return for cash. We hear about students who require money for transport, even though they live a mere two kilometres away from the university. Everyone looks to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funds as a solution to everything and this stance must be discussed bluntly and honestly," the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training, Adv Ishmael Malale, said at a briefing of the Portfolio Committee by the Department of Higher Education and Training.

The Committee heard that NSFAS funding had more than tripled from R3.1bn in 2009 to R9.7bn in 2014. The Department also provided a further R1 billion from the National Skills Fund (NSF) to assist needy students but, despite this, funding for "eligible needy students" was still unable to meet demand, representatives from NSFAS told the Committee.

Adv Malale told student organisations such as the South African Further Education and Training Student Association (SAFETSA) and the South African Union of Students (SAUS) attending the briefing that a growing



SCARCE SKILLS: Abuse of the NSFAS system is causing problems.

sense of entitlement led students to rely on financial assistance from NSFAS. He said that abuse of the system thwarted the government's education goals. "Not all the students need money from NSFAS. We used some of my grandfather's grant money for me to go to university," he added.

Rising university fees was highlighted by SAUS's Deputy President, Mr Tebogo Thothelu, who said a university education had become almost impossible to afford for those from the poorest homes. Adv Malale responded that education could not be subverted by university councils that increased fees. "Some universities have varied and diverse funding streams. In the past five years, government's commitment has been expressed through funding of universities. We give them direct transfers from NSFAS, NSF and the Sector Training and Education Authorities (SETAs). They also have donors and revenue-generating projects, yet still they increase fees."

Adv Malale urged the Committee, NSFAS and the Department of Higher Education and Training to engage with universities on "unreasonable" fee increases. He also said that the exclusion of returning students on financial grounds contributed to low success rates and was self-defeating.

NSFAS Executive Officer Mr Msulwa Daca said more than 435 000 students at the 25 public universities and 50 further education and training

(FET) colleges would be financially assisted in 2014. The University of Johannesburg received more than R500m and Limpopo University over R400m, while the University of Cape Town received some R100m. The Cape Peninsula University of Technology and the Durban University of Technology (DUT) received over R300m, while Cape Town's Northlink FET received over R50m.

Congratulating NSFAS on its performance, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, said a centralised administration system for NSFAS bursaries was being piloted. DUT was one of seven universities that would pilot the system, which "would standardise loan procedures across universities," he said. The system would also be piloted at five technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges.

Increased student enrolment was a step in the right direction for the country, Dr Nzimande said. "When the term of this administration started, there was no NSFAS for FET colleges. This year, just over R2.1bn will be allocated to FET colleges," he pointed out. He also said that Mangosuthu University of Technology, the University of the Western Cape and the University of Fort Hare had all received advance payments in 2014. Total enrolments in scarce skills such as engineering, life and physical sciences, and animal and human health care had also increased, he said. 🌟

Working for skills . . . and engineers

Denel's Saturday Schools are growing



The number of engineers from disadvantaged communities looks set to grow if a collaboration between state-owned defence entity Denel Dynamics and two impoverished schools in Gauteng bears fruit. Denel's Saturday School initiative, now in its third year, aims to improve learners' performance in maths and physical science, reports *Malatswa Molepo*.

"It is through initiatives such as this that we know that we are moving in the right direction in improving the quality of lives of our people," said the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Enterprises, Mr Peter Maluleka, while visiting Denel as part of an oversight visit to examine entities that report to the Department of Public Enterprises. "Denel is one of the companies that make us proud to be South African," he said.

The company has adopted two schools, Steve Tshwete Secondary School and Olievenhoutbosch Secondary School in Olievenhoutbosch, west of Centurion, Pretoria. The majority of residents of Olievenhoutbosch are labour migrants from other provinces. The township is plagued by problems caused by

overpopulation, and high levels of poverty and unemployment.

"The company has invested about R400 000 per year to run the programme. We see this as investment rather than expenditure, and we are committed to continuing the initiative as it is intended to pave the way for a better future for coming generations," Denel Dynamics CEO Mr Tshepo Monaheng explained.

The investment is starting to bear fruit. At Steve Tshwete Secondary School, maths marks improved by an average of 28% and physical science marks by 23%. In 2013, the school achieved a 75% pass rate in mathematics and 83% in physical science.

Government has promised to deliver

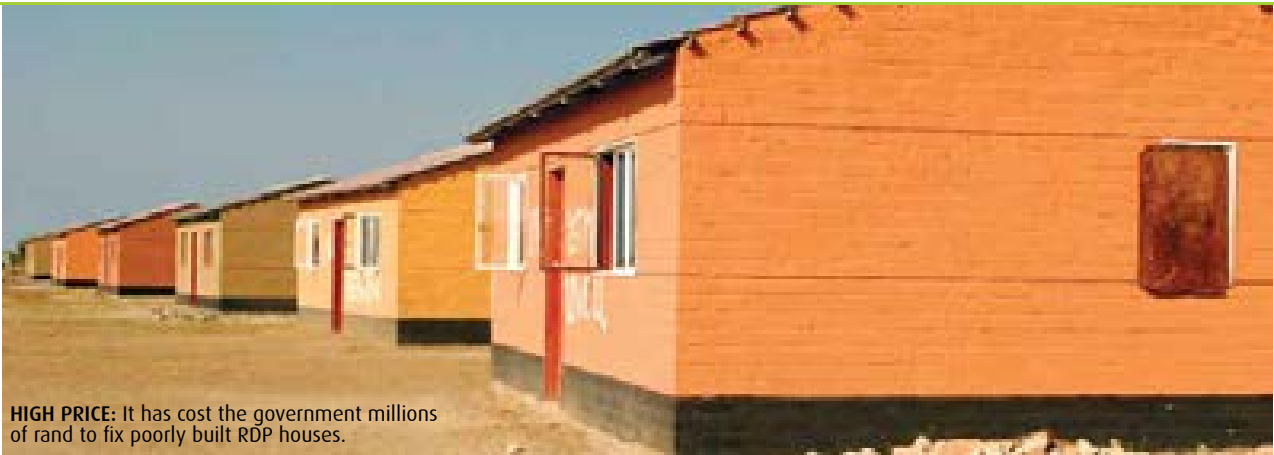
R827bn worth of infrastructure projects by 2020, but critics considered this unlikely as the 2012 Infrastructure Sector Research Survey revealed that 74% of all local companies were struggling to fill engineering posts. The report found that of the approximately 500 000 students who enrolled in engineering disciplines at all tertiary institutions from 1998 to 2010, some 70 500 graduated, an average of 14%. At universities, 16% of the initial enrolment managed to graduate, which compares unfavourably to the international average of 25%.

Denel Dynamics' Saturday School empowers disadvantaged students and includes learners from grade eight to matric. It offers bursaries to the best candidates. "We currently offer about 70 students bursaries to further their studies and we hope to increase the number as time goes on," Mr Monaheng said.

The programme started with a specific focus on maths and science, but Denel has since expanded the programme to include English and life orientation, including study skills and career guidance. Full-time engineers within Denel assist by mentoring learners.

For 2013, the students were set the task of developing a grenade system, comprising a launcher to fire "intelligent" grenades without using compressed gas or pyrotechnics to power the launcher or propel the grenade. "I was impressed with the innovations the interns came up with," Mr Maluleka said.

With results improving and many of the students gaining entry to tertiary institutions, the seed planted by Denel Dynamics seemed to have landed on fertile ground, he added. 🌱



HIGH PRICE: It has cost the government millions of rand to fix poorly built RDP houses.

One billion rand repair bill

Sloppy work follows RDP corruption

Flawed *procurement processes and corruption are major causes of shoddy work in the construction of government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses for the poor. Not only does this frustrate beneficiaries, it costs the state millions of rand to fix the houses and delays the construction of more houses for the needy, reports Sakhile Mokoena.*

Unhappy beneficiaries of RDP houses have legitimate complaints about cracks, leaking roofs and even houses that collapse during rainy weather. These findings were contained in reports from various state agencies, including the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC), the Construction Industry Development Board (CIBD) and the Public Protector.

The CIBD and the Department of Public Works were briefing Parliament's Select Committee on Public Services on efforts to improve the quality of construction in the housing industry. Committee Chairperson Mr Pat Sibande said giving people poorly constructed houses made a mockery of government's efforts to address poverty. "This means that previously disadvantaged people continue to be disadvantaged," Mr Sibande said.

The CIBD told the Select Committee that weaknesses in procurement processes were a major problem in the construction industry, especially in the construction of houses for the poor. "The major contributor to the construction of poor quality houses is the procurement process," said CIBD's Mr Mwandile Sokupa. Other contributing factors, he told the Committee, were poor site management, lack of contractor

expertise and corruption, in the form of collusion and nepotism.

These weaknesses had resulted in poorly built RDP houses across the country, costing the state millions of rands to fix or rebuild the houses. Mr Sokupa said the CIBD was developing training materials to teach competence standards to procurement officials in the construction industry. "We will have a discussion with the Department about construction procurement officials achieving competence standards," Mr Sokupa said.

The CIBD is responsible for providing strategic leadership in the construction industry, to improve and promote performance and good practices, and ensure health, safety and quality. Previous investigations and audits by the Department of Human Settlements showed that it would cost over a billion rand to fix badly built RDP houses.

Forensic investigations by the NHBRC estimated it would cost about R400m to reinstate structural integrity to the houses in line with NHBRC minimum technical requirements and the investigation of 41 000 houses. A report by the Department of Housing in the Eastern Cape noted that after assessing 20 000 houses, rectification costs would be about R360m.

Last year, the Public Protector, Adv Thuli Madonsela, told the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements that the key problem in procurement related to People's Housing Process (PHP) projects that had been hijacked by developers who provided below-specification dwellings. PHP is a Department of Human Settlements initiative where beneficiaries are actively involved in decision making about their home and make a contribution towards building it.

However, Adv Madonsela said: "Municipal inspectors sometimes neglect their duties and forego occupancy certificates, leaving it up to beneficiaries to provide 'happy letters', which are supposed to confirm building according to specification." In some provinces, she explained, developers did not follow the same specifications for each house, which caused dissatisfaction among community members. She also pointed out planning inadequacies, procurement irregularities (including corruption and fraud) leading to defective houses, and poor or no quality assurance leading to shoddily built houses having to be demolished and rebuilt at the expense of the state. False billing, in which for example 200 houses were approved and paid for, but only 150 were built, was another problem she mentioned.

The Select Committee was unhappy with the range of inputs received and promised to reschedule a meeting where the NHBRC would be present. 🗨️

Let us know what you think about RDP houses. Email us at insession@parliament.gov.za

UIF delays cause heartache

Pay centres a health
risk for officials



URGENT MATTER: Parliament is conducting oversight over labour centres in the Eastern Cape.

Delays *in Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) payments, non-compliance with labour laws and offices that could pose health risks to government officials were among the findings of the Portfolio Committee on Labour during a recent oversight visit to labour centres in the Eastern Cape, reports Sakhile Mokoena.*

Should all UIF payments be handled by a central office? The experience of the Eastern Cape Department of Labour office clearly showed that it should not, the acting Chairperson of the Labour Portfolio Committee, Mr Eric Nyekemba, said during the Department of Labour's presentation to Parliament of its annual performance plan. The Committee questioned the decision by the provincial Department of Labour to install centralised payments, which had caused delays in the payments of UIF and frustrated many citizens. During public hearings at the Lusikisiki Labour Centre in the Eastern Cape, citizens told the Committee they had waited for up to three months for their UIF payments.

The previous decentralised system, where each labour centre had paymaster services, took a maximum of three days to process payments. "The new system employed by the Department is not service delivery-friendly and it has resulted in backlogs. The Department should have looked at other ways, rather than getting rid of the services from local offices. Since this service has been centralised, it takes a long time to process payments," Mr Nyekemba said. He urged the Department to

reinstall paymaster services at all labour centres as a matter of urgency. Common challenges to service delivery in all Eastern Cape labour centres were unreliable information technology systems, and unreliable electricity supply and telephone connectivity. Mr Nyekemba called on the Department to urgently address these issues as they contributed to the late payment of UIF and other benefits.

Another problem is the lack of proper office space. In Fort Beaufort, there were unconfirmed reports that one official had contracted tuberculosis from a client because the front office desk had no window between officer and client. "The office space problem is not a new one. It is common to all provinces. As MPs, we cannot leave it. We must take it up with the Minister and with Public Works. We are not impressed with the office conditions of the labour centres in the province," Mr Nyekemba said.

Committee member Mr Kenneth Mubu said the Department's offices were "pathetic and not conducive for people to work in. This is the Department that is supposed to be looking at the working environment of other entities, but its own environment is terrible. It is unacceptable," he said.

Foreign employers, especially Chinese and Pakistani people in the wholesale and retail sector, were reported to be the worst offenders when it came to compliance with employment conditions and other labour relations laws. Officials in the Department told the Committee that these businessmen did not co-operate with labour inspectors. In some instances, they ignored them, saying they did not understand English. When matters were taken to the Labour Court, the cases were frequently delayed due to the unavailability of interpreters, a situation the inspectors described as frustrating and discouraging.

The Department also said that its database of unemployed people was not adequately used by potential employers, who preferred to use other databases as there was no legislation compelling them to use the Department's one. Mr Nyekemba said this situation would be addressed as soon as Parliament passed the Public Service Employment Bill.

The Chief Director of the Eastern Cape Department of Labour, Mr Bheki Gama, acknowledged that poor IT systems and office accommodation were hampering the effective functioning of labour centres in the province. The Committee gave the Department a month to come up with solutions and an implementation plan. 🙏

Share your views on the payment of UIF funds by emailing us at insession@parliament.gov.za



2014 budget

What the people say

The *Public Education Office interviewed South African citizens to find out their thoughts on the budget for 2014. The interviews were with volunteers, who were promised anonymity, and took place before the budget was delivered in Parliament on 26 February 2014. Not all the respondents answered all questions.*

The interviewer asked each person 10 questions. Here is what they had to say:

What is the national budget?

- 1: I think it is about R700bn for 2014.
- 2: In the trillions. I am not 100% sure.
- 3: Money that is allocated for infrastructure, etc.
- 4: It is a good indicator of what we as South Africans can expect.

What does the national budget mean to you?

- 1: Nothing... they exclude volunteers.
- 2: I feel that the budget does not involve me directly.
- 3: How much less money I'm going to get afterwards in my pay cheque!
- 4: I don't really see where the money goes in my life.

How does the state raise its funds?

- 1: From the taxpayer.
- 2: A sin tax on booze. The government keeps fining us for having a good time.
- 3: Value-added tax.
- 4: Overseas investments and grants.
- 5: The government makes a lot of money from traffic fines.
- 6: Don't forget bail money from

prisoners.

- 7: E-tolls.
- 8: Fuel taxes.
- 9: The government raises loans to meet budget shortfalls.

Why is the budget important?

- 1: We know how the money is allocated and therefore we can expect service delivery.
- 2: Transparency. We have a right to know what is happening to our money.
- 3: So that government knows how to plan and to deliver a service.
- 4: So that we can know where our money is being spent.

What should be our budget priorities?

- 1: Education, housing and health.
- 2: National health insurance.
- 3: Job creation. People need meaningful, paying jobs to be able to pay for other services. The problem is that there are not enough jobs.

Do you feel that these priorities are being adequately funded?

- 1: No. I do not believe that education, housing, health and job creation are

being adequately funded. Funds are used on areas that are unnecessary, for example, military costs, entertainment and consultants.

- 2: Not enough medication is provided and some gets stolen.

As a citizen, what do you suggest?

- 1: Making more funding available for free education.
- 2: Make sure that tenders are given to people who can do the job. Most South Africans feel that corruption has taken over.
- 3: Use Statistics South Africa. Base all decisions on statistics, to ensure that the money is spent on the areas where there is need.
- 4: Monitor implementation and do so frequently.
- 5: It is one thing to have policies, but there must be a willingness to do something.
- 6: Encourage small to medium business by reducing red tape, for example, tax registration and company registration.
- 7: More money for monitoring and evaluation: there is not enough accountability.
- 8: Money is just disappearing, don't allow that to happen.

How do you prefer to get information on the Budget?

- 1: I listen to radio. It has a broad reach.
- 2: I find that the budget speech is not user-friendly. I do not understand everything.
- 3: I prefer print. It is user-friendly and easy to understand. The key points are summarised in plain English.
- 4: I prefer to watch the commentary of the budget speech on TV. 📺

Kabo ya ditjhelete ya 2014

Maikutlo a rona ke ana

Kantoro ya Thuto ya Setjhaba e buisane le baahi ba Afrika Borwa ho utlwa mehopolo ya bona ka kabo ya ditjhelete ya 2014. Dipuisano di ne di tshwere le baithaopi, ba ileng ba tshepiswa hore mabitso a bona a ke ke a tsebahatswa, mme di tshwerwe pele ho tsebahatswa kabo ya ditjhelete mane Palamenteng mohla la 26 Hlakola 2014. Ha se bohle ba arabileng dipotso kaofela. E fetoletswe ke *Thapelo Lebona*.

Motho ya botsang dipotso o botsitse motho ka mong dipotso tse 10. Maikutlo a bona e bile ana:

Kabo ya ditjhelete ya naha ke eng?

- 1: Ke nahana hore ke tjhelete e kana ka R700bn selemong sa 2014.
- 2: E kana ka diterilione. Ha ke na bonnete bo felleltseng.
- 3: Ke tjhelete e tlang ho sebediswa bakeng sa moralomotho, jwalojwalo.
- 4: Ke ntho e bontshang hantle seo re ka se lebellang re le Maafrika Borwa.

Kabo ya ditjhelete ya naha e bolelang ho wena?

- 1: Letho... ha e a kenyetse baithaopi.
- 2: Nna ke utlwa e ka kabo ena ya ditjhelete ha e nkame ka kotloloho.
- 3: Ke tjhelete e nyane ha kae eo ke tlang ho e amohela mokgolong wa ka!
- 4: Ha ke bone hore tjhelete ena eya ho kae bophelong ba ka.

Mmuso o fumana tjhelete ya ona jwang?

- 1: Ho tswa ho balefi ba lekgetho.
- 2: Tjhelete ya lekgetho ya jwala. Mmuso o tswela pele ho re fa kotlo ya tjhelete ha re ithabisa.
- 3: Lekgetho la tlatsetso la boleng.
- 4: Ka ho tsetela mose ho mawatle le tjhelete ya dineelo.
- 5: Mmuso o fumana tjhelete e ngata ka ho lefisa ditjhelete tsa kotlo tsa mmileng.
- 6: O se ke wa lebala tjhelete ya beile

e lefshwang ke batshwaruwa.

- 7: Mebila e meholo e lefellwang.
- 8: Lekgetho la mafura.
- 9: Mmuso o kadima tjhelete ho tlatsetse kabo ya ditjhelete ha ho hloka hahala.

Hobaneng ha kabo ya ditjhelete e le bohlokwa?

- 1: Re a tseba hore tjhelete e ajwa ka tsela efe kahoo re ka lebella phumantsho ya ditshebeletso.
- 2: Ho bonaletsa. Re na le tokelo ya ho tseba hore na ho etsahalang ka tjhelete ya rona.
- 3: Hore mmuso o tsebe ho rala le ho fana ka ditshebeletso.
- 4: Hore re tsebe moo tjhelete ya rona e sebediswang teng.

Ke eng tseo e lokelang ho ba ntho tsa bohlokwa kabong ya ditjhelete?

- 1: Thuto, bodulo le bophelo bo botle.
- 2: Inshoreense ya naha ya bophelo bo botle.
- 3: Ho thewa ha mesebetsi. Batho ba hloka mesebetsi e nang le melemo ebile e lefa tjhelete e bonahalang hore ba kgone ho lefella ditshebeletso tse ding. Bothata ke hore ha ho na mesebetsi e lekaneng.

Na o nahana hore dintho tsena tsa bohlokwa di tshohetswa ka tjhelete e lekaneng?

- 1: Tjhe. Ha ke dumele hore thuto,

bodulo, bophelo bo botle le ho thewa ha mesebetsi ho tshohetswa ka tjhelete e lekaneng. Ditjhelete di sebediswa dibakeng tse sa hloka hahala, mohlala, ditjhe tsa sesole, boithabiso le dikonsaletente.

- 2: Ha ho fanwe ka meriana e lekaneng ebile e meng e a utsuwa.

Jwalo ka moahi, o hlalisa hore ho etswe eng?

- 1: Ho etswe hore tjhelete e ngata e a fumaneha bakeng sa thuto ya mahala.
- 2: Ho netefatswe hore dithendara di fuwa batho ba kgonang ho etsa mosebetsi. Bongata ba Maafrika Borwa bo nahana hore bobodu ba tjhelete bo jele setsi.
- 3: Ho sebediswe Divalopalo tsa Afrika Borwa. Ho etsa hore diqeto di itshetlehele dipalopalong, le ho netefatsa hore tjhelete e sebediswa dibakeng tseo e hloka hahala ho tsona.
- 4: Ho netefatsa hore dintho di bewa leihlo kgafetsa nakong eo di kenngwang tshebetsong.
- 5: Ho ba le maano ke e nngwe taba, empa ho lokela hore ho be le tjheleho ya ho etsa ho hong.
- 6: Ho kgothaletsa dikgwebu tse nyane le tse mahareng ka ho fokotsa dintho tse di thibelang ho phethahatsa ditabatabelo tsa tsona, mohlala, ngodiso ya lekgetho le ngodiso ya dikhamphani.
- 7: Ho be le tjhelete e ngata bakeng sa ho bea maemo leihlo le tekolo: ha ho na boikarabello bo lekaneng.
- 8: Tjhelete e nyamela feela, ho se ke ha dumellwa sena hore se etsahale.

O ka thabela ho fumana lesedi le mabapi le kabo ya ditjhelete ka mokgwa ofe?

- 1: Ke mamela radio. E kgona ho fihlella batho ba bangata.
- 2: Puo ya bajete e batla e le thata ho utlwisiseha. Ha ke utlwisise dintlha kaofela.
- 3: Ke ithatela dikoranta. E utlwisiseha ha bonolo. Dintlha tsa bohlokwa di kgutsufaditswe ka puo ya Senyesemane e totobetseng.
- 4: Ke rata ho shebella dipuisano tsa puo ya kabo ya ditjhelete thelevisheneng. 📺



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