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PRESIDING OFFICERS CALL ON SOUTH AFRICANS TO FIGHT GBV, POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Parliament's Presiding Officers, the Speaker of the National Assembly (NA) Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Mr Amos Masondo, joined the South African nation in commemorating Freedom Day, celebrated on 27 April every year.

This is the day in 1994 when black people voted for the first time in South Africa's first democratic elections, thereby establishing a new democratic government. The Presiding Officers urged South African never to take their freedoms for granted because they came at a heavy price; the apartheid government hunted down and killed many of those who fought for these freedoms that we now celebrate.

Through their sacrifices, courage and resilience, generations of freedom fighters created a platform for future generations to deepen these democratic gains and freedoms to ensure that South Africa becomes a united, non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous and free

country for all who live in it. However, the Presiding Officers called on a new generation of freedom fighters to take up the struggle against new threats that are undermining the gains achieved in 1994, including gender-based violence, drug abuse, inequality, joblessness and poverty. When we are united in our diversity, the Presiding Officers said, South Africans have the strength to overcome any obstacle and to push back against unemployment, poverty and inequality, which continues to define the lives of the majority.

For many women and girls in South Africa, freedom remains elusive due to persistent violence, which continues to rob them of their human rights and undermines their social and economic well-being. The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act Amendment Bill; the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill, and the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill became Acts of Parliament recently.

The Presiding Officers are confident that this legislation will strengthen efforts to end gender-based violence by adopting a victim-centred focus in the fight against gender-based violence.

While legislative interventions are key in this battle, equally important is dealing with backward social attitudes, cultural norms and patriarchal values that give rise to this repulsive scourge. The rights of women and girls are inextricably linked to our endeavour for radical economic revival and creation of a just and equal society.

On this important day in the history of the evolution of our democracy, we must renew our endeavours to continuously build a just and humane society that ensures equal opportunities regardless of race, colour, religion or sex. The Presiding Officers wished all South Africans a happy Freedom Day.



NCOP PROVINCIAL WEEK A PLATFORM TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY, SAYS CHAIRPERSON

In opening the ministerial briefing session on water and sanitation that marked the beginning of the National Council of Provinces' Provincial Week Programme from 29 March to 1 April, the NCOP Chairperson, Mr Amos Masondo, highlighted the purpose of the programme, writes Mava Lukani.

He said in terms of the Constitution, the NCOP represents the provinces to ensure that provincial interests are considered in the national sphere of government. Provincial Week is one of the mechanisms used by the NCOP to carry out this important mandate.

He said the historical purpose of the programme has been to give NCOP delegates an opportunity to return to their provinces to assess service delivery. In this process, they deal directly with a range of matters affecting the provinces they represent.

The focus areas for this year's programme were selected jointly with the provinces concerned. He said the programme was an opportunity for the NCOP and provincial legislatures, including the municipal councils, to conduct integrated oversight. He described the programme as a high-impact oversight-driven programme focussing on the challenges of state capacity in the provinces. It was also informed by the need to focus attention on reviving the economy following the Covid-19 pandemic and other sustained economic pressures.



ASSESSING SERVICE DELIVERY: Mr Masondo opens the Provincial Week programme that focussed on state capacity in the provinces.



The ministerial briefing directed the NCOP to collectively focus on assessing state capacity to deliver water and sanitation to communities. During the briefing session on water and sanitation on 15 March, both the Ministry of Water and Sanitation and the South African Local Government Association outlined some of the challenges besetting the provision of water and sanitation. These include the budget, personnel and skills, particularly in municipalities.



on state capacity to deliver basic services and water and sanitation to communities. Both assured the NCOP of their departments' plans to improve water delivery.

The focus on state capacity was so that we can begin to address these challenges in a manner consistent with the National Development Plan's Vision 2030. "We welcome the commitment by the Ministry to address the issues that are the root causes of the poor capacity of the state, including dealing with corruption and laying concrete plans to turn around water and sanitation services across the country," said Mr Masondo.

The NCOP's House Chairperson responsible for committees, Mr Jomo Nyambi, told the ministers that water is life and sanitation is dignity and that South Africans deserve both. Failure of the state to deliver water also causes businesses to close, which affects economic growth and employment creation.

The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Ms Patricia de Lille, and the Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, Ms Dikeledi Magadzi, appeared before the provincial delegations and other NCOP stakeholders to answer questions

The Chairperson of the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Water and Sanitation and Human Settlements, Mr China Dodovu, highlighted the fact that many of South Africa's water boards are dysfunctional.

HOSPITALS MUST FIND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE, SAYS NCOP CHAIRPERSON



The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), Mr Amos Masondo, urged Chris Hani Baragwanath and Charlotte Maxeke Academic hospitals to find innovative ways to maintain infrastructure and improve human capacity; writes Xihlamariso Ngoveni.

Mr Masondo and a group of permanent delegates to the NCOP were on an oversight visit to the two hospitals as part of the NCOP's Provincial Week Programme when he made these remarks. The delegation met with hospital administrators, as well as officials from the Gauteng Provincial Health Department, the provincial Department of Infrastructure Development, Members of the Gauteng Legislature and other stakeholders to take stock of health services in Gauteng.

The delegation saw that ageing infrastructure and a lack of human capacity were major challenges at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital. Other challenges identified include:

The workload and demand are not proportional to available staff, as the population the hospital serves has grown substantially since staff needs were last reviewed in 2006. The hospital admits up to 10 000 patients a month.

There is high staff turnover because of unbearable workload

There are currently 509 vacancies that cannot be filled due to lack of funds

Infrastructure is old and refurbishment slow

suppliers are paid late

The leader of the NCOP Delegation in Gauteng, Ms Winnie Ngwenya, emphasised that the purpose of Provincial Week is not to blame but to ensure that service delivery is prioritised.

The NCOP delegates then visited Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital where they

were briefed on the progress made towards fully reopening the facility since the fire that gutted the hospital in April 2021.

Some of the issues identified at the facility include:

- The hospital does not comply with fire prevention regulations

- Slow progress in planning, with no significant implementation from the provincial Department of Infrastructure Development

- Initial delays with getting the correct individuals involved from Gauteng Department of Health

- Maintenance funds used for remedial work in Radiation Oncology resulting in significant over-expenditure on maintenance budget

- Fire damaged area propped for initial investigation, but no work done thereafter for 10 months

- Delays in signing donation agreements and handover

- 10 months after the fire, the only work being done at the hospital is work

sponsored by Solidarity, with no clear project plan or source of funding.

- The hospital remains partly open with significant infrastructure challenges identified

Mr Masondo expressed serious concern about the slow pace of the refurbishments. The NCOP requested the hospital's management to submit a report by Friday with clear timelines on the plans to fully reopen the facility. He welcomed efforts to keep the hospital operating during the Covid-19 pandemic, and encouraged the hospital to celebrate its iconic status and rich history.

The delegates also visited informal settlements in the Orange Farm and Lenasia areas where ongoing land invasions, illegal electricity connections, and sewer spillage were highlighted. The delegation found open sewers in some streets that are impacting severely on the quality of life in some Emfuleni Local Municipality communities and are also contaminating the Vaal River.



SPACE ISSUES PLAGUING KZN POLICE STATIONS MUST BE ADDRESSED, SAYS NCOP DELEGATION

During the recent Provincial Week Programme, the National Council of Provinces' (NCOP's) KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) permanent delegates visited police stations, focussing on the state's capacity to fight crime, as well as infrastructure maintenance and human resourcing; writes Sureshinee Govender.



The delegation visited eManguzi, Inanda, Montclair, Bellair and Plessislaer police stations and saw that all of them were short of space. The Montclair station is over 100 years old and is looking its age. New premises were promised in 1994 but these have not materialised.

The delegation also heard that some stations do not have gender-based violence (GBV) desks, while at Plessislaer police station a non-government organisation has established one. Furthermore, some police stations are without victim-friendly centres for abused children and social workers are not present on site.

In order to address some of the challenges, the delegation recommended that all funded vacancies should be filled urgently to ensure that service delivery is not compromised. The South African Police Service (SAPS) and National



Treasury should also review supply chain management procedures and processes to unblock the bottlenecks that lead to procurement delays.

The delegation said those responsible for vehicle maintenance should appear before the relevant NCOP committees to explain the delays in vehicle service and repair. The delegation also said that all stakeholders and departments should appear before the appropriate NCOP committees to explain how they intend to address the office space challenge.



NCOP EASTERN CAPE DELEGATION CALLS ON PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO SUPPORT CANNABIS FARMERS

The Eastern Cape Province's permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) together with their counterparts in the Eastern Cape Legislature visited cannabis farming projects and community business cooperatives in the Alfred Nzo and OR Tambo Districts, to assess their development as part of the annual NCOP's Provincial Week Programme recently; reports Mava Lukani.



FRUITFUL HARVEST: Legal cannabis cultivation has been identified by the government as a crop with enormous potential for wealth creation.

The delegation visited the Sgidi Development Project, the Tashe Cannabis Project and the Ndwendwe Farming Cooperative in the Alfred Nzo District. The delegation also visited a cannabis crop production farm based in the OR Tambo District and met with Port St Johns' Bulawu Village's cannabis growers.

With the exception of one OR Tambo-based cannabis farm, where cannabis plants are growing under reliable protection of strong tunnels and under the supervision of knowledgeable cannabis farmers, all the other cannabis projects are plagued by similar challenges that are stifling the development of the new cannabis development projects. The challenges include unaffordable permit fees, police harassment of illegal traders

and lack of equipment, including tunnels and fertilisers, and training.

Farmers told the NCOP delegates that they are certain cannabis and hemp growing has potential in the area and are confident that the industry will thrive. However, they called on the delegation to ensure that legislation is put in place to legalise and promote the commercialisation of cannabis in their districts.

Officials from the Eastern Cape Provincial Government's Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform assured cannabis farmers and residents at large that there are plans and strategies in place to empower people with an interest in the cannabis and hemp

industry. These include making available arable land, and securing partnerships with the private sector and training.

The officials also informed the delegation that the department has allocated R10 million in the current financial year to empower cannabis and hemp farmers. The officials said the department will train 28 cannabis farmers, who will assist in laying the foundation of the industrialisation of cannabis and hemp in the Eastern Cape.

The delegation also visited OR Tambo District's Caguba and Tekwini secondary schools, as well as Alfred Nzo District's Mncwathi and Lundini secondary schools to assess, among other things, infrastructure and scholar transport. The

delegates received briefings from the Eastern Cape Department of Education's district officials.

During the briefings, the delegates heard that besides basic infrastructural challenges, other challenges included limited stationary supply to rural schools in January. Some schools were only supplied with 10% of the stationary they required. Schools had been assured by the department that they would receive 100 per cent of their stationery needs in January, Members of the Eastern Cape Legislature said.

School principals and members of school governing bodies also complained about the unavailability of water at schools. This is a longstanding problem and they have lost hope that it will ever be resolved. Although scholar transportation is still a challenge, delegates heard that the department is beginning to provide transport to children who stay far away from schools.

The delegates heard that the community built Mncwathi and Lundini Secondary Schools with improper building materials. The schools are currently overcrowded and have hazardous pit toilets. Members of their governing bodies were happy to see the NCOP delegates, so they can see for themselves the difficult conditions in which the schools operate.

The delegation was briefed by officials from the Provincial Department of Education on the progress in dealing with all these issues. The delegation welcomed the progress achieved in other areas, such as the good matric results in some schools, notwithstanding their situation.



NCOP DELEGATION FRUSTRATED, AS MANGAUNG MUNICIPALITY FAILS TO PITCH AT CRUCIAL WATER SITES

The Free State Province's permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP's) expressed their disappointment when the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality failed to meet them at three crucial water works sites during the NCOP's Provincial Week Programme recently, writes Tebatso Mabilisa.

The sites included Wepener and Dewetsdorp sewerage works on the outskirts of Mangaung. The delegation was in the province to assess the state of services delivery in Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, particularly water and sanitation infrastructure.

The delegation was led by Mr Itumeleng Ntsube (Provincial Whip and delegation leader), who expressed frustration with the municipal officials' lack of accountability and availability during the delegation's visit.

The delegation vowed to summon municipal officials to Parliament to present their case. This was a far cry from a visit to Botshabelo Digital Hub the previous day.



The hub serves as a training centre for community members and provides access to ICT. The delegation was impressed by the state-of-the-art work at the hub, which specialises in artificial intelligence, software development, automation, 3D printing and virtual reality. The centre aims to equip the area with the skills necessary to cope with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.



WATER FOR LIFE: Water shortages plague Mangaung residents and the municipality skipped an appointment with the NCOP oversight delegation.

MPUMALANGA SCHOLAR TRANSPORT IS AN IMPORTANT POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMME



The scholar transport programme is one of the most effective government initiatives to alleviate poverty and continues to ensure that thousands of poor learners have access to education,
writes **Sakhile Mokoena**.

In Mpumalanga, the programme mainly targets learners living in rural farm areas, who have to travel more than five kilometres to the nearest public school. In places that are inaccessible to buses, the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport provides bicycles for the learner to either ride to school or to the nearest pick-up spot for the bus.

The scholar transport initiative has been identified as one of the focus areas for the National Council of Provinces' (NCOP's) Provincial Week, where Mpumalanga delegates to the NCOP engaged government departments and other stakeholders on the provision of safe and reliable scholar transport in rural areas, including mechanisms to control overloading, roadworthy vehicles, discrepancies between the number of learners and route distances, late transportation of learners, as well as fiscal wastages and corrupt practices in the provision of scholar transport.

During Provincial Week, the NCOP's Mpumalanga delegation met with the provincial Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, as well as scholar

transport providers from the Nkomazi Local Municipality area. The department reported that it is currently providing transport to over 64 000 learners in 364 schools across the province. Mr Phillip Nyoni, a chief director at the department, mentioned that the growth of new settlements far from schools is leading to an increase in the demand for scholar transport.

"Despite all plans that we have, new settlements are growing. Every month there are new dwellings in areas where there are no schools. Our duty is to monitor if there is a need and provide transport for the learners to attend school," Mr Nyoni told the NCOP.

The scholar transport providers accused the department of unfair practices, including failure to pay for increases in the number of learners transported since the beginning of the contract.

Mr Solomon Shongwe, Chairperson of the Ehlanzeni Small Bus Operators, alleged

contracts to individual who do not own any vehicles. He claimed that the bulk of the province's contracts for scholar transport are awarded to businesspeople from outside the province. He also alleged that government officials are illegally benefiting from the scheme.

The leader of the Mpumalanga delegation, Ms Audrey Maleka, said while the provision of scholar transport for poor rural learners is commendable, the programme must also empower local transport operators. "I think we must prioritise local people. It cannot be correct that the business side of the scholar transport programme only benefits foreigners and people from outside the province. That is not going to grow the local economy and the department must also look into allegations of government officials benefitting from the scheme," Ms Maleka said.

The MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Ms Mohita Latchminarain, acknowledged that her department is

unfairly from the scholar transport business.

The department has also committed to create "pothole-free" tourism routes in the province. Head of department Mr Charles Morolo told the NCOP delegation that the tourism industry is one of the major contributors to the province's economy, and the road network is particularly important for tourists travelling around the province. "We are committing ourselves to pothole-free tourism routes by the end of the financial year 2022/23. We are working with municipalities in the province to produce a plan to address our road infrastructure challenges," said Mr Morolo.

The delegation was also briefed by the provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the Nkomazi municipality about the provision of water and sanitation in the area. The NCOP delegates visited the Driekoppies Water Treatment plant, which is undergoing upgrades and is expected to address the challenges of water shortages in Nkomazi.

The delegation also heard that the challenges of water supply are also common in the Bushbuckridge and Thaba Chweu local municipalities. The authorities attributed the problem to aging infrastructure that is no longer able to service growing numbers of human settlements.



WE NEED A LIFT: The government recognises that scholar transport is an essential service for rural children who live far from their schools and have no way to get there unless the state provides transport for them. The NCOP was checking on the scholar transport service in Mpumalanga recently.

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP's) permanent delegates to Limpopo recommended that the Sekhukhune District Municipality should develop a cost recovery strategy to increase revenue collection from the rural communities receiving water from the Flag Boshielo Water Treatment Works, writes Justice Molafo.

This was one of the recommendations made by a joint delegation of NCOP delegates and members of the provincial legislature during a visit to the treatment works as part of NCOP's Provincial Week programme in Limpopo. Led by provincial Whip Ms Lilliet Mamarogane, the joint delegation visited Sekhukhune District Municipality and focused on water, road and agricultural infrastructure projects.

The Flag Boshielo Water Treatment Works receives water from the Flag Boshielo Dam, which was built in 1987. The dam is situated 30 kilometers North-East of Mable Hall and has water storage capacity of 100 million cubic meters. According to Lepelle Northern Water, which is responsible for operating the treatment works as well as bulk water supply on behalf of the Department of Water and Sanitation, 40% of water from the treatment works is lost due to illegal connections and leaks.

Thus, the joint delegation recommended that the Sekhukhune District Municipality should implement water conservation awareness programmes. "The municipality needs to ensure enforcement of by-laws and also work together with traditional leaders and local municipalities in order to effectively deal



DEVELOP COST RECOVERY STRATEGY TO SUSTAIN FLAG BOSHILO WATER TREATMENT WORKS, DELEGATES RECOMMEND TO SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

with the problem of water losses," said Ms Mamarogane. Other water projects visited were De Hoop Dam and Maroga Bulk Water Supply.

The joint delegation further conducted oversight visit at the Tommpo Seleka College of Agriculture which, through its Rector and Principal Mr Mashiloane, tabled a number of expectations, including, amongst others, that it should have its own procurement account which

will ensure that necessary appointments and procurement activities are done speedily, filling of critical vacant posts as well as completion of infrastructure projects.

The delegation observed that governance of the college is not in line with the Higher Education Act, No. 97 of 1997, since there is no council serving as executive authority. Furthermore, it discovered that the college does

not have a student management system for records and revenue collection. The delegation made some recommendations, including that that failed process to move the college to the Department of Higher Education and Training should be revived and that the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development should continue financing the college until migration is finalised. The delegation also visited Steelpoortdrift, Mogalatjane and Tswelopele irrigation schemes.

Lastly, the delegation conducted an oversight visit at gravel road D4227, which provides access to Leolo village, at the intersection with road D4190 near Schoonord village in the Makhuduthamaga local municipality. There, they observed that a process is underway by Roads Authority Limpopo to appoint a professional service provider to carry out the design for the road upgrade and that the process is scheduled to be concluded in the 2022/23 financial year. It is estimated that the 10-kilometer road will require a budget of R100 million. Other road infrastructure projects visited were a steel bridge on road D2219 in Tubatse village and a low-lying bridge over the Thorncliffe river on road D1355 in Kokwane village.



SAVE EVERY DROP: The Flag Boshielo Dam in Limpopo.



NORTH WEST'S PERMANENT DELEGATES TO THE NCOP CALL ON THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS TO ASSESS DAMAGE TO BRIDGES

The North West Province's permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) visited Kraaipan Bridge in Ratlou Local Municipality as part of the NCOP's annual flagship Provincial Week programme, writes Wiseman Nombanda.



BRIDGE BUILDING: The NCOP delegation inspect the Kraaipan bridge, which was damaged during heavy rain in January this year.

The delegation expressed its shock at the collapsed Kraaipan Bridge as a result of the recent January heavy rains in the North West this year. The rains inconvenienced about 1 000 households in the area and their access to essential services such as health, schooling and shopping was severely affected.

The rains severely damaged the bridge, which was built in 1985. Speaking at the site, the leader of the delegation and the acting Provincial Whip, Mr China Dodovu, called on the Department of Public Works to urgently assess the extent of the damage and quantify the financial implications.

The bridge falls under the mandate of the local municipality. Mr Dodovu said: "We are urging the Department of Public Works to provide support to the Ratlou Municipality to ensure that the bridge is reconstructed for the benefit of the community."

The Administrator of the Department of Public Works, which is under Section 100 intervention, Mr Molete Moremi, committed to provide support to the Ratlou Municipality to ensure that the bridge is rebuilt.

The MEC for Public Works, Mr Gaoage Molapisi, said that his department is currently undergoing an assessment of all bridges in the province and will intervene where necessary. School learners are also affected by the collapsed bridge, as there is only one secondary school in the area situated on the other side of the bridge.

The delegation also visited the Sethwathwe Village near Madibogo to assess the 28 km P 1502 road construction, which has potholes that are adversely affecting road users. The delegation also visited Groot Marico Waste Water Treatment Plant where it was informed that communities were

not consulted about the project and that the communities are very unhappy about that.

The delegation heard that the provincial government is planning to enhance accountability measures for municipalities to improve service delivery. The delegation also heard that inadequate funding, human resource challenges and lack of proper equipment are the main problems causing poor service delivery in the province. As the province is a water scarce province, water tanks will be used when there is a need, the delegation was told.



SMOOTH RIDE: The NCOP delegation inspected the reconstruction of the road after residents complained that potholes were making their life a misery.



NORTHERN CAPE DELEGATION FOCUSES ON DRINKING WATER DURING PROVINCIAL WEEK



The Northern Cape's permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) conducted oversight during Provincial Week on the theme "Assessing State Capacity to Respond to the Needs of Communities" reports Mlindi Mpindi.

The delegation was led by the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Ms Sylvia Lucas, and focused on the provision of safe drinking water and assisting communities affected by drought. They visited dams, water reticulation sites and provincial storage weirs and received a warm welcome from the provincial Premier, Dr Zamini Saul.

In his opening remarks, Dr Saul highlighted the NCOP's crucial role in promoting cooperative government and fostering effective intergovernmental relation. The delegation was briefed by the MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs, Mr Bentley Vass, and the MEC of Tourism and Economic Development, Mr Abraham Vosloo on things requiring urgent attention in the province.

Ms Lucas said the delegation found that most municipalities do not have water and sanitation master plans. "We noted

that while it was grateful for the R306 million that was provided for drought relief, the relief sought by farmers went beyond water and included fodder for animals that was not catered for by provincial government", said Ms Lucas.

Ms Lucas alluded to the fact that most municipalities in the Northern Cape

lacked water maintenance teams and operators. Theft and vandalism are also a major challenge and has harmed water and sanitation municipal infrastructure in the province. "Many challenges must be address in most of the municipalities. For instance, the locust infestation requires a concerted effort to fight it. The challenge of payments to the ground sprayers that

are registered with the Department of Agriculture must be addressed. These ground sprayers are paid per kilometre; however, the tariff was last determined in 2013. The tariff does not cover the current increase in the cost of fuel and maintenance costs," concluded Ms Lucas.



DELIVERY WATER TO THE PEOPLE: Northern Cape is a water-scarce province and the NCOP Provincial Week programme focussed on the province's capacity to provide residents with an adequate supply:

WESTERN CAPE EXPECTS IMPROVED MUNICIPAL PERFORMANCE AFTER SKILLS TRAINING

Briefing the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) delegation in the Western Cape during Provincial Week, the acting Head of the provincial Department of Human Settlement, Ms Phila Mayisela, raised concerns about poor capacity to deliver services to disadvantaged communities, writes Abel Mputing

One such capacity problem lies in the implementation of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, which is supposed to supply bulk infrastructure. These projects are often hampered by procurement delays due to a lack of capacity and poor planning, Ms Mayisela said.

However, the provincial department told the NCOP delegation that it has provided municipalities with technical assistance and training in these areas and they expect a marked improvement in the next reporting circle.

Ms Mayisela went on to say that the department is also hampered by widespread vandalism, protests, theft, land invasion and construction cartels. "Recently, a site manager was shot in Gugulethu on site by this cartel. They demand work by force. They pose a real and deadly danger and they are a hindrance to some of our township development projects. To address these ills, the department has encouraged communities to protect and take ownership of their development projects."

Following the presentation, NCOP delegate Mr Mbulelo Sileku asked about progress in the provision of housing to military veterans in the province. Ms Mayisela responded by saying that military veterans are catered for in some of the province's flagship housing programmes. "We have to date allocated 100 housing units to military veterans in our Highbury housing projects."

The leader of the NCOP Provincial Week in the Western Cape, Ms Cathlene Labuschagne, wanted to know if the province has a housing needs register and whether it is aligned to a centralised national register to avoid the illegal selling of government houses.

The Deputy Director-General on Research, Policy, Strategy and Planning in the National Department of Human Settlement, Mr Neville Chainee, replied that there is now a national database to address the current weaknesses in the housing register. There is also an effort to devise a draft policy that will ensure fairness and transparency in how waiting lists for housing are managed.

Ms Labuschagne also asked about interventions to combat the proliferation



SAFE HAVEN: The Western Cape provincial government's Highbury housing project is the flagship of its housing provision programme.



of informal settlements. According to the Director of Housing Development in the Western Cape, Mr Rayan Rughubar, informal settlements are linked to land invasions, which often target land earmarked for development. This leads to many provincial housing development projects being cancelled, he said.

He added: "These developments often take place in inhospitable lands that are difficult to upgrade. But where an upgrade can take place, we do so in a phase-in approach." Ms Labuschagne further asked what is done with unspent municipal grants. The Minister of Human Settlement in the province, Mr Tertius Simmers, replied that municipalities are provided with support to ensure that they spend their grants within the given timeframes. "If we

realise that they will not, we move these grants to other municipalities that have the capacity to absorb them into their infrastructure plans."

The delegation visited to the Conradie Integrated Housing Development Project in Pinelands, which is one of the Western Cape government's flagship human settlements. Ms Labuschagne was impressed with its integrated approach to mixed use and mixed income housing development. "This development has a well thought out plan that integrates parks, medical centres, sports facilities, retails and schools seamlessly," she said.

"We are all captivated by what this project has turned out to be. It's a model for future mixed use and mixed income integrated human settlement of social

houses and Financially Linked Individual Subsidy Programme." The design and planning restore the dignity of many families who will now live in a safe-gated community, she went on to say. "This project lives up to its motto: Live. Connect. Inspire. It's, by all means, set to achieve that."

Nonetheless, she pointed out that many housing projects are situated in metropolitan areas, rather than in rural areas where developments are most needed. "That is the case because many municipalities lack the capacity to plan and execute such projects. This must be addressed urgently," Ms Labuschagne said.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAMME KICKS OFF IN MAKHANDA



READY TO LEARN: National Assembly Speaker Ms Nosiview Mapisa-Nqakula opened the Makhandanda constituency office with the launch of a Back-to-School Programme for local learners.

During the opening ceremony of the Back-to-School programme in Makhandanda (formerly Grahamstown) in the Eastern Cape, the mayor of Makana Local Municipality, Ms Yandiswa Vara, and the Speaker of Sarah Baartman District Municipality, Ms Nomhle Gaga, welcomed National Assembly Speaker Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, describing her as a true revolutionary and humble leader of the people, writes Mava Lukani.

The opening ceremony for the two-day outreach programme took place in Ms Mapisa-Nqakula's Makhandanda Constituency Office yesterday. Addressing the audience, which included grade 10, 11 and 12 learners from a special school in the area, Ms Vara said: "Ms Mapisa-Nqakula is a symbol of real and genuine representatives of the people, who are always driven by their love for the people."

The mayor and provincial speaker also welcomed the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Lechesa Tsenoli, who participated virtually in the opening part of the programme, and acknowledged the presence of NA Members participating in the programme, including the House Chairperson responsible for committees, Mr Cedric Frolic.

The Secretary to the NA, Mr Masibulele Xaso, explained the role and significance of Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs), saying they are a strategic interface between the people and Parliament. He encouraged the school pupils to share their views with the PCOs

on anything falling under Parliament's constitutional mandate. He also encouraged his listeners to familiarise themselves with how Parliament works, explaining that it comprises two houses with different constitutional mandates.

According to the Makhandanda PCO field worker, Mr Siyanda Jam, Sara Baartman's 2021 matric class performed well, despite its challenges, some of which arose due to shortened learning time during the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr Jam said the office aims to promote a spirit of commitment among the Grade 12 learners of 2022 to achieve their best. Mr Jam said the Back-to-School programme creates a platform for learners to express their challenges and state their needs. Two representatives from each of the 11 schools participating in the programme highlighted the problems their schools are experiencing. They told Ms Mapisa-Nqakula that they often arrive at school in the morning hungry and the food provided by government through the scholar feeding scheme does not reach them. Other participants in the Back-to-School programme include the Department of

Basic Education, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the National Students Financial Scheme and the Department of Social Development.



SPEAKER INVITES MAKHANDA LEARNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN LAW MAKING

The Speaker of the National Assembly (NA), Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, has urged Makana Local Municipality learners to participate in law making, as the laws passed in Parliament derive their legitimacy from meaningful public participation, writes Mava Lukani.

“We seek to deepen that legitimacy by ensuring that even children and youth become part of the mainstream in parliamentary processes and activities,” Ms Mapisa-Nqakula said.

She was speaking during the opening of a two-day Back-to-School outreach programme in her Parliamentary Constituency Office (PCO) in Makhandla recently. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on people’s livelihoods, Ms Mapisa-Nqakula recognised, and denied the public its constitutional right of involvement and participation in parliamentary law-making processes.

The pandemic complicated an already challenging situation, she went on to say, as research into the impact of parliamentary programmes showed lower levels of awareness and engagement, particularly among the 15 to 24 age group. In response to this challenge, and “As a responsive and caring institution that is sensitive to the needs of all the people, we have agreed and decided to embark on this programme that targets grade 11 and 12 learners,” Ms Mapisa-Nqakula explained.

The two-day programme formed part of Parliament’s outreach to the people to strengthen South Africa’s participatory democracy and to accelerate the development of the people, particularly children and young people, who carry the hopes for the nation’s future.

The Speaker acknowledged that for



LET’S WORK TOGETHER: Ms Mapisa-Nqakula encouraged Makhandla learners to participate in Parliament’s law making processes.

the first time since 1994, all districts in the Eastern Cape recorded pass rates above 65%, despite learners losing more than half their teaching time in 2020/21 because of the pandemic. “The province showed significant improvement in its pass rate. To bring Parliament closer to the people, foster participation and ensure that the youth understand how Parliament works, the outreach programme will focus on their development and their physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual well-being,” she said.

In explaining the purpose of the outreach programme, Ms Mapisa-Nqakula said: “Ultimately, this initiative is to see a

progressive improvement in the pass rate and celebrate the significant improvements in the 2021 academic year in the Eastern Cape. Notably, the outreach seeks to address challenges that inhibit youths’ realisation of their full potential in the area and find workable solutions.” Furthermore, the Makhandla constituency office will continue to serve as a grassroots node for engagement of young people.

Other objectives of the PCO outreach programme, include the creation of sustainable partnerships between important stakeholders in the Makhandla PCO; to involve youth and learners in identifying their needs; and becoming agents in identifying and closing the gaps preventing them from reaching their full potential; and to encourage youth and communities to dream and envision a future beyond their current reality.

Parliament constantly develops and maintains systems that enable Members of Parliament in all communities to have dynamic contact with South Africans and PCOs are one of those systems, Ms Mapisa-Nqakula reminded her listeners. “These offices are strategic points of the people-parliament interface, as they play an essential role in communities. They are the first point of contact for people on the ground by providing reliable and accurate information on what is happening in Parliament and how Parliament is representing you,” she said.

She told learners that Members of Parliament are assigned to constituencies

by their political parties, even though they are not elected from geographic areas like ward councillors are in local government elections. MPs are meant to use constituency offices to provide the public with assistance in accessing services, such as social grants, housing and health, and should be a mechanism to report back to the communities on what is happening in Parliament.

According to Ms Mapisa-Nqakula, Parliament annually allocates over R500 million to political parties to enable effective constituency work and structured its programme to ensure heightened citizen engagement. Mondays are set aside as constituency work days, the Speaker explained. This enables MPs to extend their constituency visits over weekends to better serve their constituencies. Constituency weeks are also included in the parliamentary programme.

“It is against this background, therefore, that we have embarked on a programme of reimagining, remodelling and repurposing PCOs as grassroots extensions of our democratic Parliament. We have a responsibility to ensure they are fully functional and operational for all citizens to derive progressively better returns on their investment.”

Ms Mapisa-Nqakula also launched her PCO, where she assured the people of her constituency that she will address the issues her constituency has brought to her attention.



SPEAKER TELLS LEARNERS THEIR RIGHTS ARE RECOGNISED



TALKING BACK: Makhanda students share their views with the parliamentary delegation during the recent Back-to-School programme.



The Speaker of the National Assembly (NA), Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, told learners they are fortunate to live in a constitutional dispensation that protects their rights, unlike before, when Black people had no constitutional rights, writes Mava Lukani.

“Shut up was the order of the day to us from our parents, who just instilled discipline in us,” said Ms Mapisa-Nqakula to learners who complained that parents take them for granted when they demand things that are due to them as children.

Ms Mapisa-Nqakula was responding to a complaint from a learner from Makhanda, participating in the Speaker’s Parliamentary Constituency Office’s (PCO’s) Back-to-School outreach programme, which took place in Makhanda at the beginning of June. The learners, who came from various schools in the Makana Local Municipality, told Ms Mapisa-Nqakula and other Members of

Parliament that neither the government nor their parents take them seriously because of their young age.

They also called on Ms Mapisa-Nqakula to ensure that their schools are properly equipped. They also mentioned that poor school maintenance makes them vulnerable, especially when the grass is long, as this raises the likelihood of snakes hiding there.

They told Ms Mapisa-Nqakula that it is a gross contradiction to call learners back to school, yet there are no teachers in classrooms and substance abuse is rampant. Drugs are a more dangerous virus than Covid-19 they said, because the latter is preventable. Ms Mapisa-Nqakula assured learners that her PCO will assist with these challenges.

Deputy Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture Ms Nocawe Mafu called on Makhanda learners to learn and internalise the values of persuasive engagement in a tolerant and highly disciplined way on all issues. “Always promote the spirit of conversation among yourselves and between yourselves and other role-players,” stressed Ms Mafu. She said learners are agents of social change and a bright and glorious future.

Ms Mafu was the programme director of the morning session of day two of the Back-to-School programme. The session provided an opportunity for MPs and government departments to respond to learners’ statements from the previous day.

Ms Nompandolo Mkhathshwa, the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology, said the PCOs are an extension of Parliament and a mechanism by which Parliament goes to the people. She called on young people to be activists and to speak out about their challenges. She advised learners to listen, as listening is the biggest part of leadership.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Sports, Arts and Culture, Ms Beauty Dlulane, welcomed the way learners spoke about their challenges. “You demonstrated that you are learners who reason [by] not being emotional. Please be like that forever, as challenges require thinking to find solutions, not emotions and disruption,” said Ms Dlulane.

She went on to say that committee chairpersons must ensure that

infrastructure grants for municipalities are used appropriately, after learners complained about the crumbling road infrastructure in the Makana Local Municipality. “It doesn’t make sense that infrastructure crumbles, yet there is budget for it,” she said.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Ms Nonhlanhla Ncube-Ndaba, spoke about gender-based violence (GBV), as learners highlighted this as one of their challenges. She told learners that Parliament has prioritised GBV and has an ongoing engagement with the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities to combat the problem. She said there is a clear role in the Makhanda PCO for the National Youth Development Agency.

The Department of Basic Education told learners that it was handicapped by budget cuts in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years, which is why it was unable to meet some of its responsibilities in schools. However, it has sufficient budget this year, and infrastructure issues will be addressed. The department also said that it has launched a GBV programme in schools.



GRASSY PARK PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OFFICE PROMOTES CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN GRASSY PARK



MY RIGHTS=YOUR RIGHTS: The Grassy Park Parliamentary Constituency Office is led by Member of Parliament Ms Judy Hermans (third from left)

On 2 April 2022, some 60 children, parents and community leaders from Lavender Hill in Cape Town participated in a fun-filled day of live music, games, art and talks on human rights involving community-based organisations (CBO) and a Member of Parliament, Ms Judy Hermans, who is responsible for Grassy Park Parliamentary Constituency Office (PCO).

According to Insaaf Isaacs, one of the event organisers and the founder of the organisation agent4change, the aim of the event was to impart knowledge about children's rights, making use of arts and culture in line with World Café methodologies.

The Lavender Hill community has many socio-economic problems, of which gangsterism and crime are top of the list. An event like the Children's Human Rights Day was a welcome relief for many of the children, who, for a few hours could shift focus from their daily stresses to engage in fun learning activities.

The event paid attention to the rights afforded to us as people, inclusive of children's rights, and what children can do to ensure that they protect themselves and their rights. "It was to make our children aware of their rights and the dangers in the community," said Dorothy Soetwater representing Hope Pentecostal. She explained that

the children attending the event were organised through a local campaign that escorts children to and from school.

At the event, Ms Hermans spoke about children being equal and warned them about people who may want to take advantage of them sexually. She spoke

of her desire to roll out children's rights awareness programmes in all communities, believing that programmes of this nature are a way to educate children as well as their parents.

"This is also a way to raise awareness and to lift people out of the cycle of

gangsterism and gender-based violence (GBV) prevalent in our communities," said Ms Hermans. She added: "We must have more programmes that reach out to young children in their formative years so that they don't perpetuate the culture of gang violence and violence in the community."

Community activities like the Children's Human Rights Day event support the mandate of the Parliamentary Constituency Offices by "Taking Parliament to the People". It fosters co-operative relationships with government departments, NGOs, local artists, community activists and CBOs, which is critical for Parliamentary Constituency Offices to serve as a centre of parliamentary programmes, particularly around access to information.

Ms Hermans said she would like to see the PCO continue to partner with CBOs as a means to represent the concerns in the community. "It was really heart-warming to see different community organisations working together in service of the community and making our young aware from an early age about human rights and the rights they hold as members of society."



PARLIAMENTS MUST ACT SWIFTLY TO REDUCE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SAYS SPEAKER



CLIMATE MATTERS: The Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Mapisa-Nqakula addresses the IPU Assembly on the role of parliaments in addressing the global climate crisis.

Heads of the world parliaments should make every effort to deal with climate change through oversight and other interventions within the constitutional powers of the institutions they lead. This was the view of the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, during the general debate of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU's) 144th General Assembly, which was held in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, in March 2022. Justice Molafo reports.

The debate was a standing item of the IPU Assembly and this year's theme was "Getting to Zero: Mobilising parliaments to act on climate change", offering parliaments an opportunity to reflect on climate change and the need to mobilise parliaments to act swiftly to reduce its negative effects.

The Speaker led a multiparty delegation of senior Members of the South African Parliament to the Assembly. She said that tackling climate change had

far-reaching implications for socio-economic development, production and consumption patterns. "Climate change remained a serious global threat to national and international development, and its impact has continued to exacerbate at the time when the world is also dealing with the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic."

During her debate speech, the Speaker mentioned that the poor in developing countries have borne the brunt of climate change. "It is worth mentioning that the manner in which climate change affects us depends on where we are located on the global map. As it could be expected, the hardest hit population groups are poor people. These are, in the main, inhabitants of developing countries who are predominantly farmers who depend on rain-fed and basic mechanisms for tilling the land and earning a livelihood. The only way their conditions can change is through policy shifts. Critical to this is dedicated action on the part of policymakers and the people who represent them, like legislators and Members of Parliament. Great changes throughout history have been born out of crises; we should therefore not waste this moment," the Speaker said.

The Speaker conveyed South Africa's appreciation of the outcome of the Glasgow Climate Change Conference, which called upon the international community to rally behind a shared objective to inject a greater sense of

urgency, on the basis of international equity and the latest available science.

South Africa's main priorities remain securing an ambitious and progressive finance and adaptation package to support the African region and other developing countries to alleviate the negative impact of climate change. "In South Africa, we support the government's view articulated by the President on the green recovery for our country. It is our view, that the Rome COP 26 legislative prescripts can and must safeguard the planet's ecosystems, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and limit global temperature increases. In this instance, we call on the high-income countries to step up and take responsibility given the fact that they

continue to benefit most from the use of fossil fuels," she said.

Commenting on the same subject matter from the side lines of the 144th Assembly, South African delegate member Mr Cedrick Frolick said that climate change will always remain on the agenda of multilateral forums because parliaments must always look for ways to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The South African delegation left the IPU General Assembly with renewed impetus to advocate for Parliament to address the issues raised at the 144th Assembly, including conflict resolution, access to ICT, women empowerment and youth participation in the business of



Parliament. The delegation consisted of the Speaker of the National Assembly Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, the Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces Ms Sylvia Lucas, Ms Doris Dlakude, Mr Cedrick Frolick, Dr Annelie Lotriet, Mr Floyd Shivambu and Ms Fikile Masiko.

Reflecting on her work within the Standing Committee on Social Development at the IPU assembly, Dr Lotriet said she contributed to resolutions on issues of accessibility, especially where school children do not have access to ICT devices of connectivity as well as non-availability of infrastructure and data in remote areas.

Ms Dlakude, meanwhile, participated in the Southern African Development Communities (SADC), which looked at issues of diplomacy and conflict resolution, with specific focus on the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The SADC Group Meeting agreed on a position that is in line with that of South African Parliament and government

on peaceful conflict resolution through dialogue, mediation and diplomacy.

In line with the SADC Geopolitical Group, the African Geopolitical Group nominated Mr Shivambu to represent the continent in the committee established to draft an emergency resolution on peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, respecting international law, the Charter of the United Nations and territorial integrity. "Ultimately, the resolution was adopted by the IPU and one of the most important conditions that we made is to insert a resolution that says that IPU is willing to listen to all parties in the hostilities," said Mr Shivambu.

In light of this resolution, the IPU has since appointed the Speaker to the Task Force of the world association of parliaments to mediate on the Russian-Ukraine conflict, representing the African Geopolitical Group. "The appointment followed a virtual meeting between myself and the President of the IPU, Mr Duarte Pacheco, in which a formal invitation was made to me to form part

of the global legislative effort to, through dialogue, mediation and diplomacy, bring about a peaceful resolution to the current situation. The Task Force will be led by the Speaker of the United Arab Emirates, who also serves as Deputy President of the IPU," said Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula.

Ms Lucas participated in various IPU-related committees, including the Forum for Women Parliamentarians, which focused on the need for women's involvement in peace-keeping efforts as well as the impact that conflicts and war have on women, children and vulnerable groups. This forum adopted a resolution on rethinking and reframing the peace processes with the view to ensure lasting peace and international solidarity. According to Ms Lucas, "The resolution will ensure that parliamentarians contribute to more nuance and stronger involvement of women, not only in peace-keeping process, but also to address the issues of women and children being vulnerable to wars and conflicts that did not occur by their design."

The Forum further held discussions on gender-based violence and particularly how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected women, children and the vulnerable groups.

Meanwhile, Ms Masiko served in the Forum for Young Parliamentarians, which looked at the participation of young people in parliaments' business. Through her statement, Ms Masiko said that young people should participate in the electoral process, not only as voters, but also as participants who should be elected to Parliament, legislatures and municipal councils.

Finally, Parliament may have to establish a joint committee to ensure that it complies with all the prescripts of the multilateral forums it belongs to, said Ms Lucas in her capacity as Convenor of IPU in Parliament.



NCOP DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON COMMENDS STRONG RELATIONS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND CHINA

The Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Ms Sylvia Lucas believes that more could be done to cement the growing cooperation between South Africa and China to cement their position as key players in emerging markets and developing economies, reports Sakhile Mokoena.

Ms Lucas recently led a South African Parliament delegation in a virtual engagement with the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). The high-level discussions were headed by Ms Lucas and the Vice Chairman of the CPPCC Mr Bater. Ms Lucas said the recent Covid 19 period has further strengthened relations and deepened political trust between the two countries, both of whom are also members of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa).



STRONG TIES: Deputy NCOP Chairperson Ms Sylvia Lucas led a high-level engagement with the Chinese Parliament recently.

"The relationship between our two countries has been cemented in the collective approach to Covid and how we have been assisting one another. We shared information and expertise and, in the process, cemented relations that have been created over the years. However, Ms Lucas believes that much can still be done between the two countries within

existing agreements. In addition, proper oversight is needed over implementation of existing trade agreements.

Speaking through an interpreter, Vice Chairman Bater said China and South Africa have shown a strong desire to enhance dialogue and cooperation in different fields, including deepening

deepen political trust. He also made a commitment that the CPPCC will encourage Chinese enterprises to increase investment in South Africa, and help the country realise its development initiatives. 'We also commit to build a better Brics and set good examples of emerging markets and developing countries,' he said.

He also spoke about relations between China and the African continent, saying the two have supported and helped each other in the fight against Covid-19. This has further cemented practical cooperation in various fields such as trade, investment and skills development. "Enhancing unity and cooperation with African countries is an important cornerstone of China's foreign policy and long-term strategic choice," Mr Bater said.

Both the NCOP and the CPPCC play critical roles in the political lives of their respective countries, Mr Bater went on to say. The sharing of communication and experiences should continue to advance mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation and make new contributions to the development of Chinese and South African economies.



AUDITS MUST HAVE POSITIVE IMPACT ON CITIZENS' LIVES, SAYS AUDITOR-GENERAL



PUBLIC ACCOUNTING: Auditor-General Ms Tsakani Maluleke.

South Africa's Auditor-General Ms Tsakani Maluleke has told the Speakers' Forum that auditing public institutions should have a positive effect on the lives of citizens. "It doesn't help anybody for us to just audit and report on lack of progress and little improvement, the question is how can we start to change the system," she said.

The Speakers Forum is an organisation of Speakers and Deputy Speakers from the National Assembly and provincial legislatures, along with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). Addressing the Speakers' Forum held in April, the Ms Maluleke said that many state audit institutions worldwide think about how their work impacts on the societies they serve.

The Auditor-General said that her office is committed to its constitutional mandate as the independent auditor of public funds. The office aims to audit and report in a manner that will enhance governance and oversight, and ensure that it continues to improve

levels of transparency and accountability throughout the public sector.

"It is important that we continue to push ourselves as the supreme audit institution to see how we can contribute to the improvement of the lives of the citizens of South Africa. We are seized with making a positive impact on the lives of the people and doing that through shaping our work, so that over time we have a much stronger, more direct and consistent impact on improving the lived reality of South Africans," she said. Ms Maluleke believes that if audits achieve these goals, it will boost public confidence in state institutions.

However, the Auditor-General cautioned that public institutions' failure to address recommendations from her office is weakening these institutions, which in turn weakens the state's ability to deliver services that improve citizens' lives. "With the weakening delivery of services and weakening of public sector institutions, you see the social and political instability as a consequence. It's not just service delivery protests and violence, but we

also see South Africans opting out of public services, such as healthcare, education and security.

"When trust in public institutions diminishes, it also tarnishes your ability to do your work as the supreme audit institution," Ms Maluleke added.

Ms Maluleke also reported to the Speakers Forum that in 2021 the World Bank ranked the Auditor-General of South Africa one of only two audit institutions in the world that enjoy high level of independence and freedom from political interference. The World Bank commended South Africa for giving the Office of the Auditor-General a constitutionally defined role within our democracy that is clearly articulated and supported.

The AG also spoke about the need to strengthen relationships with other partners and to change how things are done to shift public sector culture. "We recognise that whilst good audit outcomes are a strong and important indication of whether or not a public sector institution has the requisite

commitment to transparency, delivery, good governance and accountability, we know that, as important as all those things are, it is not the only thing the public sector has to do. They must get good audit outcomes, but they must also do everything else."

The Office of the Auditor-General does not run public sector institutions, but rather sees itself as a key part of South Africa's democracy. "We look at how we can use all of the instruments that we have to sustainably and efficiently shift the public sector culture through using insight from the audit work that we do, through using influence given the reach that we have across all three spheres of government, across all levels of administration, political executive, but also oversight. So that over time we drive consistent and meaningful improvement. We get those that run the public sector to worry about setting a different culture, one that is characterised by performance, accountability, transparency and integrity," the Auditor-General concluded.



SPEAKERS' FORUM CALLS FOR SUPPORT FOR KZN FOLLOWING FLOOD DISASTER

The Speakers' Forum expressed its distress at the disaster caused by floods that have claimed the lives of over 400 people in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) recently, writes Nolizwi Magwagwa.

The first Speakers' Forum meeting of 2022 was briefed about the floods that have ravaged the province and also prevented the Speaker of the KZN Legislature from attending the forum. The Speakers' Forum sent its condolences to the families who lost loved ones and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

The Speakers called for urgent interventions to save lives and livelihoods, and further called for the mobilisation of resources and facilities to alleviate the trauma and suffering of the people of KwaZulu-Natal.

It also congratulated National Assembly Speaker Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula on her appointment as a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) Task Force established to intervene in the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

The forum took place in Pretoria East recently. In her opening address, Ms Mapisa-Nqakula informed the forum

that following the 144th IPU plenary in Bali in April she had a virtual meeting with the President of the IPU, Mr Duarte Pacheco. During that meeting Mr Pacheco asked her to serve as a member of the special IPU Task Force on the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

She said her decision to accept the IPU nomination followed extensive consultations with President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Amos Maseko, and other Presiding Officers of Parliament. President Ramaphosa also called Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula, to congratulate her on her nomination, wishing her and the IPU Task Force success in their efforts to mediate the Ukraine-Russia conflict. The IPU Task Force is led by the Speaker of the United Arab Emirates.

The Speakers' Forum further noted with appreciation all Parliament's

international relations work, including the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, other IPU work, the Pan African Parliament, and the Southern African Development Cooperation Parliamentary Forum.

Various members of the Speakers' Forum serve on the executive committees of these multilateral parliamentary governance structures, such as the Gauteng Speaker who serves as Treasurer of the CPA Africa Region, and the Chairperson of the NCOP, who serves on the executive committee of the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Commonwealth Africa region.

The Speakers' Forum debated a range of other matters to strengthen the legislative sector including:

1) A briefing by the Auditor General of South Africa, Ms Tsakane Maluleke, on the 2030 vision and creation of a well-functioning audit agency. The Speaker's

Forum congratulated and encouraged the Auditor-General of South Africa for its clarity of vision and its roadmap to deepen the impact of its work as a nationally and globally recognised audit agency. Ms Maluleka presented the 2030 vision, strategy and efforts to help shift the overall culture of the public sector to new heights that are anchored on accountability and focus on people's well-being. The Speakers congratulated the AG for its rating as one of the top two audit authorities in the world, as rated by the World Bank, with full independence to carry out their mandates without undue interference.

2) A briefing on Parliament's fire disaster and progress made in executing the recovery plan. This is the first meeting of the Speaker's Forum since the devastating fire that destroyed the National Assembly and Old Assembly buildings in Cape Town. The Speaker's Forum has called for more vigilance and proactive measures



to protect public institutions and the country's heritage resources from the malicious destruction. Discussing a report from the Acting Secretary of Parliament, Ms Baby Tyawa, the Speaker's Forum unanimously endorsed a proposal for a special appropriation to rebuild or restore

the destroyed National Assembly as a clear message on the resilience of the country's legislative sector against any efforts to disrupt its operations as recently observed destruction of various state buildings in the country.

The Speaker's Forum also received progress reports on the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers; the Handbook for Presiding Officers; the newly established Parliamentary Institute; the amendment of the Electoral Act; and the processing

of the Legislative Sector Bill and the amendment of the FMPPL.



SCOPA CALLS ON ESKOM TO BE ROBUST IN CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) conducted a three-day oversight visit to Eskom, which included visits to Medupi and Kusile power stations, reports Faith Ndenze.



This oversight was a follow-up to 2019 oversight visit that led to SCOPA making 23 recommendations to Eskom. The committee's aim for this oversight was to check the progress made and ascertain the challenges preventing the power utility from meeting the deadlines it set for itself in 2019. The committee noted that Eskom has made positive progress on nine of the committee's recommendations from 2019 and the others are a work in progress.

SCOPA's recommendations included the recovery of financial losses, consequence management, improving the capacity

and functionality of the internal audit unit, the correction of defects identified at Medupi and Kusile power stations, and coal quality management.

The Chairperson of SCOPA, Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa said the committee is satisfied with Eskom's progress at the Medupi power station, but is concerned about the 13-million-ton stockpile of coal, which will grow to 14 million tons at the end of the year, with a value of R8 billion. This is due to the "take or pay" policy agreement that Eskom entered into with the coal supplier.

"SCOPA has noted the progress Eskom has

made in reducing some of the elements of penalties of the agreement by 25 percent. Furthermore, the committee hopes that the power utility will continue engaging in redefining and amending those agreements so that there is no money from fiscus that will be spent on coal that is not needed."

Mr Hlengwa also said SCOPA remains concerned about the Kusile power station, but has seen some progress. "Leadership and management shifts were called to be exercised in order to get the necessary skills and expertise to oversee the power station, so that it can be successful," Mr Hlengwa said.

"The committee is receiving quarterly reports from Eskom on these issues to ensure that it has a better and clear perspective on what is happening. Ultimately, the committee wants an effective, functional and efficient Eskom that will meet its mandate and deliver good governance, particularly regarding financial management."

SCOPA has also impressed upon Eskom the importance of robust consequence management, to push back the frontiers of corruption that besets Eskom.

Eskom CEO, Mr Andre de Ruyter told SCOPA that the power utility has opened 104 criminal cases with the South African

Police Service for further investigation. "12 of the above 104 have been through the criminal proceedings provided for under the Criminal Procedures Act."

Mr de Ruyter also told SCOPA that as of 31 March 2022, Eskom's Industrial Relations Department has registered 376 employees who have undergone disciplinary processes. Of these, 340 have been completed, while 36 are still in progress.

"The completed disciplinary cases resulted in 128 employees terminating Eskom employment through resignation, abscondment and 18 retirements during the disciplinary processes, with a further 35 being dismissed because of fraud and corruption.

Mr Hlengwa said all these elements combined, including but not limited to the maintenance of the fleet of the power stations, is to deal with the issue of load shedding. Eskom explained to the committee the circumstances that led to load shedding. "Load shedding cannot become a default position for Eskom to cope without doing the necessary things the power utility must do, which include maintenance, consequence management and rationalising in terms of the greenhouse gas emissions headache that Eskom is saddled with," he said.



MSUNDUZI PLEADS FOR COMMITTEE SUPPORT IN QUEST TO REINSTATE IPTN GRANT

Msunduzi Local Municipality made a case before the Portfolio Committee on Transport for it to continue to receive the Public Transport Operation Grant (PTOG). The municipality was prevented from using public funds to implement the Integrated Public Transport Network (IPTN) due to non-performance, writes Sibongile Maputi.

The committee conducted a weeklong oversight of road infrastructure in the North West, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal in April. The deterioration in the roads in those provinces was glaring; numerous potholes make it difficult to drive on some national roads. In KZN the challenges have been compounded by the recent floods that killed many people and have put an abrupt halt to services that depend on road infrastructure.

The Msunduzi Local Municipality told the committee that vacancies in the project have been filled and it is being managed internally. The municipality hopes to use the project to strengthen economic development, which is why it is so important that the national government lifts the municipality's suspension from the IPTN project, said the municipality's mayor, Mr Mzimkhulu Thebolla.

"We welcome the visit by the committee as it brings with it many advantages for the municipality. We are accountable and the image of the municipality will change if this project is implemented, as it will contribute to the economy of Mgunundlovu," he said.

The committee heard that the IPTN suspension in Msunduzi was instituted in 2019 following underperformance that resulted in delays and eventual non-implementation of the project. The municipality's senior manager for roads and Infrastructure, Ms Lindelwa Mngenela, told the committee that although infrastructure layout is complete, operational readiness services were affected by the suspension.



She added: "We are focused on infrastructure. The project employed 247 people and we had envisaged that 200 permanent jobs would have been created had the project been rolled out." Procurement challenges and objections from business forums, some of which went to court, resulted in big delays, she explained.

Other challenges included relocation of bulk services, a dispute between main contractors and their sub-contractors, political instability, traffic congestion and the taxi industry. She said the taxi industry is now in full support of the project.

"All infrastructure layout is complete, but the municipality will not be ready to operationalise the project. Alignment if all plans for the project were to be implemented will now be lost," continued Ms Mngenela. She said the

new political leadership is committed to the project and it is championed by the deputy mayor.

The committee questioned how many passengers will be serviced by the project, how buses will be procured and whether a bus company will be established. The committee also asked about the missing environmental impact assessment certificates, a turnaround strategy and the original business plan.

A Department of Transport official said that suspending three cities (Msunduzi, Buffalo City, and Ambombela) from the grant was not an easy decision. However, the department is working with Msunduzi on their turnaround strategy and negotiations are still ongoing with National Treasury to draw up readmission criteria.



DEFENCE COMMITTEE CALLS FOR IMPROVED CO-OPERATION BETWEEN ARMSCOR AND DENEL



The Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans conducted a two-day oversight visit to defence-related research and development facilities in Pretoria.

The committee first visited the Armaments Corporation of South Africa's (ARMSCOR) research division Gerotek on the west side of Pretoria, reports Jabulani Majozi.

Gerotek provides an accredited independent test and evaluation facility to the Department of Defence, as well as both the local and international motor industry.

The committee was given a demonstration of the high-speed track and skid pad for advanced driving. The track is used to train VIP protection officials in advance driving and offers the same services to the corporate sector. Research and Development executive, Dr Noel Mkaza, mentioned that the facility has been underutilised recently and Gerotek is looking at various ways to generate revenue.

The committee also heard that people have built houses on the facility's perimeter fence, posing a potential risk to themselves and the facility. The leader of the committee delegation, Mr Thabo Mmutle, said: "The committee recommended that the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure could be engaged to explore the possibility of transferring the land to Gerotek directly."

The committee also recommended that Gerotek should explore other avenues by engaging with government departments to ensure that its facilities are used optimally by stakeholders in the security sector. The committee further recommended that to generate income Gerotek could market its services to various stakeholders, such as the South African Police Services, the Department of Transport and the traffic police therefore generate revenue for the entity.

The committee then made its way to Centurion for site visits to ARMSCOR's Technopark. The park comprises research and development facilities such as Protechnik Laboratories, Ergonomics Technologies and Hazmat Protective Systems, which all provide defence research and materials to the defence force. The committee was given a tour of each research facility and watched demonstrations on how they support the defence force through research and development. Some of the facilities also displayed product developments aimed

at mainstream markets, which will help generate revenue and mitigate the need for funding.

Ergotech provides services primarily in military ergonomics research, focusing on biomechanics, human physiology and human functional performance. Committee member Mr Kobus Marais asked what is being done about the poor-quality footwear for soldiers, which is an ongoing problem. Ergotech then demonstrated its research on the issue.

The committee also visited Denel Land Systems at Lyttelton to conduct site inspections on the Badger development. The committee toured Denel's assembly plant and the Badger military vehicles produced at the Lyttelton plant.

During discussions with the committee, Denel officials said they have been unable to meet their contractual obligations due to ARMSCOR's refusal to accept deliverables of the Hoefyster project, citing lack of funds to pay staff among other challenges. However, the committee called on Denel to be truthful to its client, the South African National Defence Force, on why it cannot meet its targets.

The leader of the committee delegation, Mr Thabo Mmutle, said there is no need to "sugarcoat" anything and pointed out that Denel is way behind on project delivery deadlines and is presenting a

different product to ARMSCOR than the one it wants. It would be unfair to expect ARMSCOR to accept this product.

The committee was impressed with Denel's presentation but believes the reality at Denel is very different. ARMSCOR CEO Adv Solomzi Mbada added that Denel had failed to fulfil its contractual obligations when it had a full staff compliment. "We are dealing with a disappointed customer, which is the South African National Defence Force," he said.

The committee resolved to call both ARMSCOR and Denel to find a way to resolve the challenges with the project.

The committee concluded its oversight programme with a visit to the Special Forces School in Murrayhill and a building occupied by the Department of Defence and Military Veterans in Hatfield, Pretoria. The Special Forces School trains a strategic force that conduct both joint and independent operations with other armed services. The main aim of the school is to ensure South Africa has a combat-ready force for deployment anywhere in the country within a short space of time.

During a briefing to the committee, the school highlighted that people have built houses and other structures on its perimeter fence, which is causing problems.



TRADE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE CONCLUDES FRUITFUL OVERSIGHT VISIT TO SEVERAL PROJECTS

*The Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry concluded a successful week-long oversight visits to Gauteng and Mpumalanga during its April oversight week, writes **Rajaa Azzakani**.*

The committee visited the Pretoria-based National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) and the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) to assess the implementation of their turnaround strategies.

The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Judy Hermans, noted that the two entities are making progress. “The NRCS appeared to have gained some traction in resolving the technical portion of its audit finding in relation to the estimation of its levy revenue and the implementations of its ICT system. The committee will continue to monitor the matter and awaits the findings of the Auditor-General for the 2021/22 financial year.”

Regarding the SABS, the committee commended the progress made in upgrading its technical infrastructure. However, substantial work remains to be done to restore the SABS to a state-of-the-art facility, and to ensure its financial sustainability. The committee further acknowledged the need for adequate financial resources to continue the upgrading of infrastructure.

The committee also met with the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development and Tourism and the Mpumalanga Economic Development Agency (MEGA) on developments at the Nkomazi Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and the Ekandustria Industrial Park. There was general concern about the slow progress in the development of the Nkomazi SEZ



since designation, as this may negatively impact on the viability of the SEZ and its ability to attract investors within the province.

Regarding Ekandustria, the committee heard that MEGA was struggling to effectively manage the park, as there is a mixture of well and poorly maintained facilities. The committee was particularly concerned by the debt owed to the City of Tshwane for the provision of water and electricity.

Ms Hermans emphasised that this is one of the reasons for the District Development Model to ensure buy-in from all spheres of government to work towards economic development

and job creation in townships and rural economies.

The committee also visited a number of entities funded by the Industrial Development Corporation, the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition’s (DTIC) Support Programme for Industrial Innovation (SPII) in Mpumalanga. The committee was pleased with the manner in which government funding has been spent, but it also highlighted the need to review the criteria used to determine whether to fund a project or not. Furthermore, the committee endeavours to have follow-up visits with a number of companies whose

investments occurred at an early stage of development.

The committee was impressed by the level of localisation within the projects it visited, as well as the IDC’s support of primary agricultural producers in alignment with the Poultry Master Plan. It also noted the NEF’s excellent aftercare support programme offered to projects it has funded. However, the visit highlighted significant challenges faced by one of these projects due to Eskom’s ongoing unscheduled maintenance at the Tutuka Power Station and its impact on the broader economy in relation to job creation.



PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE COMMENDS TEMBISA AND MAMELODI HOSPITALS

The hospital's CEO Dr Naing Soe said that it operates on limited budget but has managed to collect 100 per cent of its targeted revenue collection of R5.1 million. The patient waiting time has been significantly reduced and the waiting area has been revamped. Additional areas of the hospital are currently being renovated and in September this year, an additional 10 new service areas will be added to the hospital, including 20 new beds in the maternity ward.

Currently the hospital has a 400-bed capacity with 1 112 full-time staff, with 126 posts for sessional employees on contract to assist with the Covid-19 pandemic and related cases.

Dr Soe mentioned that Covid-19 cases in Pretoria East are on the rise and is busy preparing for the fifth wave. Furthermore, Dr Soe said that he and his clinical team still do clinical work to alleviate the pressure of patient numbers and no patient is turned away from the hospital.

The acting committee Chairperson, Ms Teliswa Mgweba, commended Dr Soe for his efficient administration of the hospital and its budget. "We have noted with appreciation the excellent manner in which the hospital is run and managed. Keep up the good work of serving the people," added Ms Mgweba.

The committee also visited home affairs offices, including the Kempton Park Home Affairs Centre. Here the committee heard that the centre provides services to the residents of Tembisa and should ideally be located in the township, rather than where it is currently, as the people of Tembisa have to travel a long distance to access services. The committee also heard that posts vacant for three years have still not been filled. The centre manager asked the committee for assistance to fill these posts.

According to the centre manager, they currently process 11 000 smart cards and 12 500 birth registrations on average

per annum. However, over 1 000 green identity books and smart cards have been waiting for years to be collected. Furthermore, the centre's offices are too small to accommodate all the visitors and are poorly ventilated, with non-functioning air conditioning and windows do not open. The building is not compliant with occupational health and safety standards.

All these challenges have been reported to the building's owners as it is their responsibility to address them, but they remain a problem. Dr Soe asked the committee for assistance in the matter.

The committee also visited Tembisa Tertiary Hospital and heard that the hospital was upgraded in 2012 from a regional to a tertiary hospital, but it is still funded as a regional one. Tembisa Tertiary Hospital services Tembisa township with a population of about 2.5 million people as well as the City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Tshwane metros.

During weekends, the hospital accommodates many trauma cases, including stabbings, gunshots and assaults. The hospital's CEO said that the hospital's staff complement should be 4 000 employees to cope with demand, but currently only employs 2 300. He said the hospital should only accommodate referrals, not walk-in patients.

The old and dilapidated infrastructure requires maintenance and funding, and the hospital also requires a new MRI scanner, among other equipment. According to the CEO, the hospital also serves unregistered pregnant foreign nationals, who go to the hospital a day before they are due to deliver. This is risky, as pregnancies are usually monitored throughout the nine-month term.

The committee encouraged the CEO to continue with the excellent work.

*During its week-long oversight visit to selected institutions providing public services in Gauteng, the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration also conducted unannounced visits, including to the Mamelodi Regional Hospital. The committee welcomed the efficient and competent manner in which the hospital provides healthcare services to the people of Gauteng, writes **Sureshinee Govender**.*

COMMITTEE STARTS NATIONWIDE PUBLIC HEARINGS ON HOUSING CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL

The committee started this process in the Eastern Cape and in May it will visit Free State and Gauteng provinces. The Bill received overwhelming support in the Eastern Cape, especially from recipients of RDP houses, who emphasised that the Bill has the potential to protect beneficiaries against unscrupulous companies and corrupt government officials.

Despite this support, however, there were concerns that the Bill threatens the existence of small contractors, due to the onerous nature of its regulatory requirements. For Mr Zwelephile Nombadlaza, a resident of Umthatha west, the Bill excludes small businesses. "I do not support the Bill, because the Bill requires everyone, including small businesses, to register and pay an annual registration fee to the National Home Builders' Registration Council (NHBC). How are we going to pay for that when all we do are menial contracts with

limited rewards?" Mr Nombadlaza asked. The initial NHBC application fee is R745.61, once-off non-refundable, with an annual membership fee of R526.32. These fees, according to Mr Nombadlaza, will make it difficult for small businesses to register and comply with the legislation. He also raised concerns about the inaccessibility of NHBC offices, which are mainly located in urban areas such as East London, making it difficult for builders in rural areas to reach them. He further suggested that the Bill is capitalist in outlook and caters for established companies, while excluding smaller players in the industry.

Despite Mr Nombadlaza's views, people in support of the Bill mentioned its potential to assist RDP beneficiaries, who suffer with the consequences of bad building workmanship from the contractors appointed to build their houses. Nonetheless, they also said that

additional consideration should be given to the needs of poor people in rural areas. Ms Nokuthula Mlokoti from Ward 8 in Intsika Yethu Local Municipality said her support for the Bill came with conditions. She highlighted that for a number of years' people have complained about the quality of their houses' construction but have not received any help. This was exacerbated by the failure of the NHBC, which she suggested operated like a cartel. "We welcome a Bill that will protect homeowners from inferior quality buildings. While we welcome the strengthening of the home warrant fund, the fund must not only be accessible to the rich who build houses in suburbs and estates, but also all buildings," Ms Mlokoti emphasised.

She also mentioned that the home building construction sector has been dominated for many years by a few select companies, which should change to make

space for small, emerging companies.

The committee welcomed these views from the Eastern Cape and believes that public participation will strengthen the Bill and make it responsive to the lived experiences of the people. Furthermore, public consultation and participation is an important constitutional requirement that Parliament is obliged to include in its decision-making processes. "These hearings are in line with Section 59 (1) of the Constitution, which urges for the public involvement in the legislative making process of the Assembly. Also, we are hopeful that as the primary beneficiaries of the protections proposed by the Bill, participants will present qualitative inputs aimed at improving the Bill to ensure that it meets daily challenges. We will take all the views made during the hearings into consideration when deliberating on the Bill," said Ms Machwene Semenya.

*In fulfilment of the constitutional obligation to consult the public, the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements has begun a nationwide process to understand the views of the public on the Housing Consumer Protection Bill, writes **Malatswa Molepo**.*

PARLIAMENT LEADS EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS TO ENSURE BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY

*In an effort to strengthen intergovernmental relations, Parliament recently hosted a Three Sphere Planning session where representatives from national, provincial and local government shared ideas on how to improve relations in order to better service delivery; writes **Sakhile Mokoena**.*



NCOP Deputy Chairperson Ms Sylvia Lucas.

The theme of the virtual session was Strengthening Three Sphere Planning, Coordination and Oversight, through a Targeted Policy Focus, for Accelerated Implementation. It was officially opened by the Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Ms Sylvia Lucas, who said the session should help the legislative sector to strategically align its oversight trajectory to the end of the sixth Parliament with the policy priorities contained in the Electoral Mandate, the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2019 – 2024), the National Development Plan and other key development policy documents.

“It is imperative that we strengthen our three-sphere planning, coordination and oversight processes and mechanisms. This must, in turn, also assist us to reshape and crystallise our oversight focus, as we focus on targeted policy priorities, as guided by the developmental needs emanating from the developmental landscapes of provinces, metros, districts and localities,” Ms Lucas said.

The NCOP Deputy Chairperson told the session that joint integrated planning will ensure that all three spheres of government work together and avoid duplication and fragmentation. “Joint integrated planning will enhance powers and functions of our institutions, which include the ability to work in a cooperative way so that there is greater cohesion and positive impact, and it will also enhance individual accountability amongst our spheres in effective and efficient ways, in order to accelerate service delivery,” she said.

Ms Lucas also touched on the floods in KwaZulu-Natal, saying the disaster should serve to remind public representatives to prioritise disaster

risk management, the Disaster Management Act and the National Disaster Management Framework, which guides the implementation of the act. These legislative instruments, she pointed out, emphasise the importance of the integration and co-ordination of risk reduction, across all spheres of government. They promote the incorporation of disaster risk reduction into development initiatives and position disaster risk reduction as a statutory responsibility for all government departments.

Addressing the session on the subject of strengthening Parliament’s ability to track policy implementation and creating strategic platforms for Parliament to assess and measure the impact of its work, the Speaker of the National Assembly Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula maintained that in order for the country

to succeed in meeting its developmental targets, proper planning, execution and monitoring should guide the structure and pace of implementation.

“For this to happen, we need effective oversight of both the planning and implementation throughout all spheres. And, most importantly, we should ensure that where these plans depend on the collaborative effort amongst the various spheres, such collaboration does indeed happen in an effective manner to achieve intended results,” the Speaker said.

She also took time to explain current principles of the country’s intergovernmental relations framework, which she said are not based on a system of hierarchical supervision amongst the various spheres, but on cooperative governance, interdependence and support. This means that, although there

is recognition that certain supervision may be required, in terms of ensuring compliance and providing support to lower spheres, there is complexity and limit to how far such supervision can be intrusive from one sphere to another.

“Parliament’s oversight shouldn’t be limited to reporting periods, but function as an ongoing monitoring of implementation of policy objectives and plans. Parliamentary committees should assess the rate of implementation through in-year monitoring of plans, identifying obstacles through early warning systems and suggesting trouble shooting to unblock obstacle to implementation throughout the year,” she said.

The NA Speaker further argued that although this may already be happening, in terms of quarterly reviews, it needs to be strengthened as a mechanism to guarantee desired outcomes and impact. Performance assessments of government departments and entities should not await the tabling of annual reports. Early warning systems must guide Parliament to assess and intervene timeously.

She also called on Parliament to use the in-year continuous assessment as well as the year end reports on expenditures and annual performance, to ensure that adequate financial resources are allocated to the achievement of the development objectives at all levels.

The Speaker believes properly structured and effective oversight that places the well-being of the people at the centre of government work can make parliaments the driver of efforts for a people-centred development.





PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



English

Housing Consumer Protection Bill [B10-2021]



Housing Consumer Protection BILL

[B10-2021]

Parliament of South Africa is inviting inputs from the public on the Housing Consumer Protection Bill (B10-2021). The National Assembly (NA) Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements acting under section 59 (1) of the Constitution, seeks to facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the Assembly and its committees.

What is the Housing Consumer Protection Bill?





The Bill seeks to repeal the Housing Consumers Protection Measures Act, 1998 and to provide for:

-  the protection of housing consumers;
-  the continuance of the National Home Builders Registration Council as the National Home Building Regulatory Council;
-  the registration of home builders;
-  the enrolment of homes in order to be covered by the home warranty fund;
-  the regulation of the conduct of home builders;
-  the continuance of the home warranty fund;
-  claims against the fund;
-  the funds of the Council and for the management of those funds;
-  procurement and contractual matters in relation to the building of a home;
-  the enforcement of this Act; and
-  related matters.

What is the purpose of the Housing Consumer Protection Bill?

The Housing Consumer Protection Bill seeks to repeal the Housing Consumers Protection Measures Act, 1998 (Act No. 95 of 1998). The Act came into effect on 4 June 1999 and has been amended at least three times.

The Department of Human Settlements and the National Home Builders Registration Council, have since identified certain challenges with key provisions of the Act. To this end, the Bill seeks to ensure adequate protection of housing consumers and effective regulation of the home building industry by, inter alia:

-  strengthening the regulatory mechanisms;
-  strengthening the protection of housing consumers;
-  introducing effective enforcement mechanisms; and
-  prescribing appropriate penalties or sanctions to deter non-compliance by home builders.

In addition, the Bill seeks to address the economic transformation of the industry through the introduction of provisions relating to the warranty fund surplus which may be utilised towards developmental programmes for the home building industry.

The Bill seeks to create an enabling environment for new entrants into the home building industry through the introduction of contractual provisions that ensure their sustainability in the market.

The Bill further seeks to align and create synergy with other relevant pieces of legislation such as the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999), and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000).



What is the purpose of the main proposed amendments to the Act?



Chapter I of the Bill deals with definitions, application of the Act and application of the Public Finance Management Act to the Council.



Chapter II of the Bill seeks to provide for the continuation of the Council, established in terms of section 2 of the Act, as a juristic person to be known as the National Home Building Regulatory Council. It further seeks to provide for the objectives of the Council, governance and structures of the Council.



Chapter III of the Bill seeks to provide for the registration of home builders and developers, the establishment of a register of home builders, the requirements for registration, suspension of registration, grading of home builders and liability of an unregistered home builder or developer.



Chapter IV of the Bill seeks to provide for the establishment of a register of enrolments.



Chapter V of the Bill seeks to provide for the funds of the Council.



Chapter VI of the Bill seeks to prohibit the procurement of services to build a home.



Chapter VII of the Bill seeks to provide for the enforcement of the provisions of the Bill, once enacted. The chapter further seeks to provide for alternative dispute resolution, criminal offences and sanctions.



Chapter VIII of the Bill seeks to provide for various matters including the Home Building Manual; the making of rules by the Council and of regulations by the Minister; the recovery of fees; vicarious liability; the personal liability of the members, directors, trustees of a home builder; duties of estate agents, financial institutions, conveyancers; the codes of conduct for Council members, home builders, developers and other industry role players. This Chapter also deals with transitional matters.

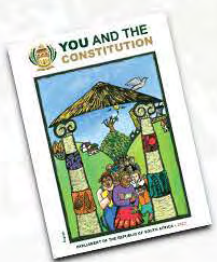


HOUSING CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL [B10-2021]

Why is Parliament inviting public input?

Parliament is mandated by the Constitution to ensure that the public is involved in all its processes, including law-making. To honour this mandate, the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements is inviting all interested and affected parties to participate in its processing of the Housing Consumer Protection Bill.

Why is it important to participate?



Public participation is a democratic process that ensures law-makers listen to the voices of the people when they are making law.

Who must participate and how?

All interested and affected parties, individuals and organised formations i.e. the home building industry, labour federations and affiliated unions, workers, the business sector, civil rights organisations and academic institutions, to mention a few, are invited to participate by making written submissions to the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements. The Committee may also invite members of the public to make oral submissions.



What happens after you have submitted your inputs to the Committee?

The committee will consider all public inputs on the amendments of the principal Act for the National Assembly (NA) to pass the Bill. The Bill will then be referred to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) for further deliberation and concurrence. Thereafter, the Bill will be sent to the President for assent and signing into law.

For further information about submissions, upcoming public hearings and requests for free copies of the bill, contact:

Secretary of the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Kholiswa Pasiya-Mndende on:






Cell phone : 083 709 8495

Telephone : 021 403 3725

Email : kpasiya-mndende@parliament.gov.za

Did You Know ?



-  Parliament is the national law-making body of South Africa.
-  Parliament comprises two Houses, namely the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).
-  Bills are mainly introduced to Parliament by the Minister of the specific government department.
-  Parliament is obliged by the Constitution to obtain views of the people before passing any bill.
-  For the bill to be passed into law, the President needs to sign it (assent to it).

Submission guideline

Head your submission with the full title of the topic or Bill.

Date:	
Topic or Bill:	
Name of Committee:	

State whom the submission is from

First and Surname	
State whether you have been nominated to represent an organisation	
Name of organisation (if nominated to represent an organisation)	
Your position in the organisation	
Aims of the organisation	
How many people belong to the organization?	

Provide contact details (Include a contact address, daytime telephone number and ID number. If for private reasons you do not wish these details to be made public, state this in your covering letter and leave it off the submission itself)

Postal Address:	
Street Address:	
Province:	
Tel No:	
Cell No:	
E-Mail:	

State whether you wish to appear before the Committee

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you wish others to appear with you before the committee?
If yes, please provide their full name(s) and surname(s) and their role(s)

Name(s) and Surname(s)	Role(s)

State your concerns on the Bill or topic. Please support your views by examples.

Provide recommendations/suggestions.

Sum up or list the main points of your recommendations.

Who else supports you?

Name(s) and Surname(s)	Role

Please take note that the information you are submitting will be processed as set out above and that by submitting this information, you consent to the processing of this information as required by the Protection of Personal Information Act No. 4 of 2013.



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