

# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

## QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY

THURSDAY, 29 MAY 2025

DEPUTY PRESIDENT

### *Regression of social cohesion*

**★7. Mr K M Mmoiemang (Northern Cape: ANC) to ask the Deputy President:**

(1) Whether, in light of the 2024 SA Social Cohesion Index (SASCI) research report that was released on 5 February 2025 by the Inclusive Society Institute (ISI), the Government has considered implementing measures to ensure that the emerging attacks on the country's transformation agenda will not lead to further regression of social cohesion (details furnished); if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) whether the Government is considering utilising the planned historic national dialogue to build a shared understanding of the devastating effects of many years of racial exclusion (details furnished); if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? **CO692E**

**REPLY:**

**Honourable Chairperson**

We have not only welcomed the 2024 South Africa Social Cohesion Index (SASCI) that was released on 5 February 2025, but we are now implementing the recommendations of the report. This is because the SASCI research report offered us a sense of where we stand as a country in our collective journey towards social cohesion and nation building.

Equally, the Index offers valuable insights into the nation's strengths and challenges, highlighting areas of progress and those requiring urgent attention. Guided by the Index we are now developing targeted strategies and policies that promote inclusivity, equity, and tolerance among all citizens, thereby enhancing society's overall well-being.

We also welcome the observations of the SASCI that over the last 30 years of democracy, South Africa has made significant strides towards building a united non-racial and non-sexist society and improving the lives of all its people.

In this regard, we have worked together to establish a progressive constitutional order, expanded access to social infrastructure and services to millions of people, and set our economy on a path of reform.

However, our country continues to face significant challenges, including sluggish economic growth, high unemployment, widespread poverty, and persistent inequality. These challenges have contributed to a growing sense of social discontent and alienation among our people. Now is the time to reset and reimagine the future of our nation, not just for ourselves, but for generations to come.

This renewal must be led by South Africans themselves, through deliberate and purpose-driven conversations. It is within this spirit that the envisioned National Dialogue will be focusing on the following critical issues:

- Economic transformation, inclusion and empowerment;
- Poverty, Inequality and hunger;
- Governance and a capable, ethical and developmental state;
- Crime and lawlessness;

- Nation building and social cohesion;
- Advancing constitutional rights and principles;
- Promoting progress values, (Moral Regeneration);
- Participatory democracy and an active citizenry;
- Land reform and food security.

## **Honourable Chairperson**

In addition to these critical matters, we are also addressing social ills such as Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF); racism; crime; and corruption in support of promoting and strengthening social cohesion.

The Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture is implementing various programmes and activities that include Community Conversations and Dialogues Programme. Through these programmes, communities from diverse social, racial, political, and religious backgrounds, get a platform to discuss complex and sensitive social issues and foster social cohesion.

Furthermore, the Department of Social Development is implementing the Men and Boys Championing Change Programmes, which focus on engaging men and boys to address gender-based violence, HIV, and other social issues in the country.

Through the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, government is leading initiatives to promote the importance and value of the Constitution, Constitutional Democracy, and the Bill of Rights. These include dialogues aimed at increasing and deepening constitutionalism, respect for human rights, and the rule of law, especially amongst the most vulnerable and marginalised.

I thank you.

### ***Coordinated anti-poverty/job creation programmes***

**★8 Mr F J Badenhorst (Western Cape: DA) to ask the Deputy President:**

What impactful measures has he coordinated for (a) anti-poverty and (b) job creation programmes in reducing (i) unemployment and (ii) poverty levels since his appointment? **CO700E**

**REPLY:**

**Honourable Chairperson.**

Let me thank Honourable Badenhorst for raising this important question. The daunting task of combating poverty and unemployment necessitates a collective societal effort, involving governmental, civil society, businesses and private sector participation.

Government is implementing a comprehensive strategy to reduce poverty, which includes economic development, income support, human capital investment and basic services, as envisaged in our National Development Plan. Our programmes include social welfare, which promotes inter-departmental cooperation to improve access to healthcare, affordable housing and education.

Municipalities are also providing support to indigent households in the form of subsidies for water and electricity needs. These interventions also extend to human settlements and other social welfare services.

To further strengthen all these initiatives, President Cyril Ramaphosa has recently launched the Second Phase of Operation Vulindlela, aimed at boosting job creation and economic growth by implementing structural

reforms across several key areas, including digital transformation, local government performance, and addressing spatial inequalities.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Our government is actively combating poverty through social grants and programmes offered by the **South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)**, that are aimed at reducing hunger and poverty among lower-income groups.

These grants are essential for mitigating economic risks for the most vulnerable, as poverty levels would be significantly worse without them. SASSA for instance has allocated R285 billion for social grants for the 2025/26 financial year with the objective of providing direct cash transfer payments to approximately 27 million eligible beneficiaries.

To this end, when delivering the Budget Speech last week, the Minister of Finance announced an old age grant increase by R120 to R2 310 from April 2025, and this amount is set to increase again in October 2025, as originally announced in March.

In addition to these interventions, the Department of Social Development, and FinMark Trust have collaborated on a Pilot Project for Generating Better Livelihoods (GBL), aiming to connect social grant beneficiaries with sustainable economic opportunities. This initiative includes job opportunities, entrepreneurship support, and financial inclusion programmes, particularly for social grant recipients.

However, government aims to reduce social grant dependency by encouraging labour market participation, promoting economic growth, and expanding skills and employment opportunities, while focusing on vulnerable populations for targeted grant distribution.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

With regard to creating job opportunities, we have implemented several programmes that are already yielding results. These programmes or initiatives include the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI), the Youth Employment Service (YES) programme, the Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES), the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Tax Employment Incentives, and the Labour Activation Programme (LAP).

These programmes are targeted at creating the much-needed jobs, provide training and skills development, and support businesses in creating employment opportunities, particularly for youth, women and persons with disabilities.

Together with the private sector, we can fight unemployment and eradicate poverty in our communities.

I thank you.

### ***Underperformance/service delivery failures***

#### **★9. Ms M Makesini (Free State: EFF) to ask the Deputy President:**

Whether, in light of his delegated responsibility to implement rapid response interventions on service delivery (details furnished), he has taken any actions to address the chronic underperformance and service delivery failures in water and sanitation, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas where communities lack access to clean water and functional sanitation infrastructure; if not, why not; if so, (a) what actions and (b) what are the further relevant details? **CO703E**

#### **REPLY:**

#### **Honourable Chairperson**

The issue of service delivery remains a priority. Hence in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Water Task Team, constituted by the Ministries of Water and Sanitation, COGTA, Human Settlement, Land Reform, and Infrastructure South Africa, we are focusing on addressing water challenges working together with Municipalities.

As part of the government's efforts to address underperformance and service delivery failures in water and sanitation services, we hosted the National Water and Sanitation Indaba on March 27-28, 2025.

Together, with SALGA, Provincial and Local Government we agreed that we must focus on the implementation of the following critical areas:

- Delivery/ implementation models;
- Increasing investment through financing options and ensuring the financial viability of the sector;

- Enhancing and strengthening technical and operational capacity and efficiency;
- Building partnerships through building water sensitive and resilient communities;
- Fighting criminality and corruption in the water and sanitation sector.

In taking forward the outcomes of the National Water and Sanitation Indaba, the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, on behalf of the Water Task Team, is not only doing sites visits, but also intervening where there are water infrastructure related challenges.

The approach is to intervene at a source and at the last mile so that we can save water, and more critically deliver quality water in the rural and urban areas of our country. No village and township households must not have access to quality water.

To this end, the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Hon Pemmy Majodina, presided over the reopening of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Tunnel on Sunday, 25 May 2025, after the tunnel was closed in October 2024 for maintenance. The reopening of this tunnel will enable the flow of water into the Vaal River Integrated System, which supplies water to five provinces in South Africa, namely Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West, Free State and Northern Cape.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

I have also been engaging with the Water Services Authorities (WSAs), to ensure that they meet their constitutional obligations in terms of water related service delivery, and in the worst-case scenario, management of essential water and sanitation infrastructure.



In the meantime, Government is implementing reforms through legislation such as the Water Services Amendment Bill, which will soon be presented to Cabinet. The National Treasury's Reform of Metropolitan Trading Services Programme and Phase 2 of Operation Vulindlela are also introducing reforms that are aimed at changing the municipal water sector to operate on a utility model.

Moreover, the Department of Water and Sanitation is actively intervening in poorly performing municipalities and action plans have been agreed upon to address water supply shortages and other challenges in struggling municipalities.

Lastly, DWS has established the Water Partnerships Office (WPO) at the Development Bank of South Africa to assist municipalities to contract for public private partnerships (PPPs) and to contract with independent water producers (IWPs). These will make it easier, quicker, and cheaper for municipalities to enter into partnerships with the private sector.

The resolutions of the National Water and Sanitation Indaba together with the interventions that are currently being implemented at all levels of government will form the basis for a concrete response turn-around plan as espoused through the District Development Model.

For these resolutions to be achieved there must be greater collaboration between government, civil society, the private sector, water experts, and water research institutions to support the turn-around plan.

I thank you.

### ***Basic service delivery backlogs***

#### **★10. Ms S Ndhlovu (Limpopo: ANC) to ask the Deputy President:**

Whether the Government of National Unity has discussed any policy departures to the District Development Model as a (a) policy framework and (b) plan for supporting struggling municipalities like Thabazimbi Local Municipality; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? **CO693E**

#### **REPLY:**

**Honourable Chairperson,**

The District Development Model is a whole of government approach in resolving service delivery challenges. We are not going to deviate from this policy because it ensures that we effectively respond to the challenges facing communities in a more coordinated manner.

The DDM approach is a constitutional imperative, as it advances the principles of cooperative governance and inter-governmental relations.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

In as far as support to Thabazimbi Local Municipality, the new municipal council was duly constituted on 12 December 2024 following successful by-elections, which automatically led to the lapse of Section 139(1)(c) intervention by the Provincial Executive Council.

I have decided to send a team to engage with the leadership of Thabazimbi Local Municipality soon. The engagements we are doing, are not just about ticking the box, but are about intervening and getting the Municipality to meet its constitutional responsibility.

Hence, Thabazimbi Local Municipality is currently receiving support from the National and Provincial Governments under section 154 of the constitution, aimed at enhancing their capacity to manage their affairs and perform their functions. The Municipality is currently being supported to implement performance turnaround plans.

These plans focus on interventions aimed at strengthening governance and institutional capacity, financial viability, accelerating service delivery and economic development.

In addition, an Inter-Ministerial Committee has been established to implement a Municipal Performance Turn-Around Strategy over three phases. The first phase of this intervention entails an assessment of the state of the municipality, including identification of deficiencies, gaps, and challenges and ascertaining the type of support and intervention required in the municipality.

The subsequent phase focuses on actual implementation of remedial measures to address deficiencies identified in the assessment report. This phase is centred on monitoring and tracking of inter-governmental agreed projects that are in line with the DDM approach.

### **Honourable Chairperson**

The implementation of the DDM remains the priority of this Government. We therefore call upon all our District Municipalities to focus on the implementation and monitoring of Districts' *One Plan* catalytic projects within their district spaces. We further encourage collective planning by all spheres of government including collaboration with our Traditional and Khoisan Leaders.

I thank you!

### ***Alleged accusations of corruption***

**★11. Ms S M N Mokoena (KwaZulu-Natal: MKP) to ask the Deputy President:**

(a) What is his response to allegations of corruption that have been brought against him by a certain political organisation (details furnished), including claims of benefitting from nepotism and failing to declare certain properties and (b) what steps is he taking to (i) maintain transparency and (ii) restore public trust in his Office? **CO696E**

**REPLY:**

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Thank you, Honourable Mokoena, for raising this matter. Allegations are exactly that, allegations. The most important thing is to prove, through the courts of law, the authenticity of the allegations so that we can come to a conclusion if one is guilty or not.

Indeed having seen the frivolous allegations against me, I have subjected myself to the necessary processes and institutions. This includes a detailed response to the Ethics Committee in Parliament and equally to the Integrity Commission of my party, the African National Congress.

I am yet to engage with other institutions because none has come forward about the allegations made against myself, and my family. I will continue to subject myself to the relevant institutions as established through our constitution.

Furthermore, on 11 October 2024, I issued a public statement in response to ongoing social media attacks targeting my character.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Let me conclude by reaffirming my unwavering commitment to fully cooperate with the Ethics and Integrity Committee of Parliament, as well as any other law enforcement agency, or state institution that may require clarity on any matter concerning these and other allegations against my name.

I thank you.

### ***Service delivery challenges***

**★12. Ms M M Bains (Western Cape: ANC) to ask the Deputy President:**

Whether the Government has engaged with the City of Cape Town to collaborate with various national departments in implementing (a) rapid response measures and (b) interventions to address service delivery challenges that are facing the township residents in the said municipality (details furnished); if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**CO694E**

**REPLY:**

**Honourable Chairperson,**

The Inter-Governmental Relations Act mandates collaboration between all spheres of government to deliver services to citizens, requiring the national government to work with all provinces to address service delivery challenges.

The City of Cape Town, like other Metros should invest in the building and upgrading of infrastructure, which is aimed at benefiting under-serviced areas. This seeks to address unequal spatial development patterns, thereby, promoting the quality of life for all our citizens.

These projects are being undertaken in collaboration with relevant national government departments, and in line with the District Development Model (DDM) that we are implementing across all provinces.

We are however, concerned about continuous challenges faced by majority of township communities and informal settlements within the City of Cape Town. Townships and informal settlements within the City of Cape Town face significant sanitation challenges due to factors such as inadequate infrastructure, legal constraints on service provision, and socio-economic barriers.

In this regard, the Department of Water and Sanitation and the City of Cape Town have been collaborating to address ongoing water and sanitation challenges, particularly in light of infrastructure overburden, environmental considerations and socio-economic disparities.

Efforts to enhance water and sanitation services include initiatives to improve communication between the City of Cape Town and residents, particularly in townships and informal settlements.

The City of Cape Town and the Department of Water and Sanitation have continued to collaborate in addressing the persistent challenge of sewer spillages, which pose significant risks to public health, the environment, and the dignity of affected communities.

This partnership is centred on infrastructure upgrades, policy reforms, and community engagement initiatives aimed at strengthening wastewater management and improving service delivery.

### **Honourable Chairperson**

Since December 2024, National Ministers and Deputy Ministers have undertaken oversight visits to assess disaster responses and project implementation. These include Disaster interventions in informal settlements such as Du-Noon, Joe Slovo, Khayelitsha, Lwandle-Nomzamo, and Imizamo Yethu.

More recently, Human Settlements Minister Thembu Simelane has also visited Phase 2 of the Conradie Park Social Housing project in Cape Town as part of government's interventions to address service delivery challenges in previously disadvantaged communities of the Western Cape.

I have also been advised that the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Cape Town to establish a collaborative framework aimed at enhancing infrastructure delivery, governance and innovation in Construction and Facilities Management.

This will further strengthen partnerships by aligning with national strategic objectives, fostering intergovernmental cooperation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building to drive sustainable development and improve service delivery.

These collaborative projects highlight the critical importance of continued infrastructure investment, effective land-use management, and strengthened intergovernmental collaboration to ensure sustainable basic services, particularly in vulnerable and informal settlement communities.

I thank you