



ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE MEMBER GCALEKA-MAZIBUKO AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY DEBATE ON 4TH DECEMBER 2025, CAPE TOWN

TOPIC: ENSURING SAFE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DIGNIFIED CLASSROOMS, AND QUALITY EDUCATION FOR EVERY POOR DESERVING CHILD AND STUDENT WHILST STABILISING MUNICIPALITIES SO THAT WATER, ELECTRICITY, AND ROADS CAN WORK AGAIN

HONOURABLE MEMBERS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

FELLOW SOUTH AFRICANS, ESPECIALLY MY PEOPLE OF SEDIBENG REGION AND THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

GREETINGS TO YOU ALL!

HOUSE CHAIRPERSON,

Today is indeed a good time be South African.

Kumnandi kakhulu ukuba umuntu wase Mzansi. We are a proud nation that is able to deal with our challenges head on. We are the people that defeated a political system that deprived many of us for enjoying the basic things that humans need. These are shelter, food, education and basic services.

Namhlanje, manivuka you interacted with your municipality.

You woke up and switched on the lights- ***umasipala lo!***

Wavuka wageza- ***umasipala lo.*** Kube akekho umasipala, ngabe awugezanga!



Some of you left your house and used public transport. Some of you used your private transport. Okusalayo sonke, sisebenzisa indlela- ***umasipala lo!***

Those who have children, you took them to school. Today, we must give thanks to ANC, because it is the ANC that ensure the integration of the schooling system in our life time.

Before nginitshela indaba enkulu. i ANC ithi,

"We are united behind this Amendment Bill because of its commitment to rebuilding a state that can deliver practical and meaningful change to our vulnerable and marginalized communities."

Izindaba ezimnandi lezi.

MADAM SPEAKER

Fact, not fiction, the ANC has delivered the following:

1. ***Ensured alignment of the DoRAB's adjustments to the 2025/26 local government allocations*** with State of the Nation Address 2025, Medium Term Development Plan 2024-2029, and ANC Manifesto commitments.
2. ***Increased local government conditional grants increased from R53.9 billion to R57.7 billion***, this is a 7.1% increase. With specific efforts made towards reforms and disaster recovery in line with commitments to build capable municipalities, improve services at the local government, and drive localized economic development



3. Enabled the reconstruction and rehabilitation of municipal infrastructure damaged by extreme weather conditions across 15 municipalities in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. ***R496 million to the Municipal Disaster Recovery Grant.***
4. ***R2.1 billion was added to the metro trading services component of the Urban Development Finance Grant to improve service delivery performance*** and unlock additional infrastructure financing for metropolitan municipalities – this adjustment strengthens financial sustainability, operational efficiency and capacity in water, electricity, and sanitation service.
5. ***R4.6 billion to the Provincial Equitable Share*** (with the North-West receiving R1.81 billion, the Free State receiving R215 million, Gauteng receiving R2.61 billion and KwaZulu-Natal receiving R1.06 billion) to stabilise provincial budgets so that provincial departments of education which rely on the Provincial Equitable Share can hire and adequately compensate teachers, fund day-to-day school operations, maintain school infrastructure, and protect essential services.
6. ***R2.8 billion to the Basic Education Vote to strengthen the Early Childhood Development subsidy*** – this is significant as a child's future starts at age 0-5, and a country that fails its children has already failed its future.
7. ***R454 million to the Education Infrastructure Grant*** to repair schools destroyed by climate change related storms in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

Indeed, it is nice to be South African.



HOUSE CHAIR,

During the public hearings on this Amendment Bill, SALGA made it clear to the Standing Committee on Appropriations that our municipalities are in distress, highly indebted, and unable to maintain electricity, water, sanitation, and road infrastructure. This Amendment Bill decisively intervenes to address SALGA's concerns.

In the very same public hearings, COSATU, SECTION27, the Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC), and countless other stakeholders all warned the Standing Committee on Appropriations that climate change is becoming a national emergency as it collapses the functionality of municipal infrastructure. The impact of climate change on municipal infrastructure is not theoretical to us. We have witnessed the pollution in the Vaal River which causes severe water shortages that are affecting residents from all walks of life; I have walked the streets of Johannesburg during floods, which damage critical infrastructure and therefore disrupt service delivery; and I have engaged poor and working-class families in the Sedibeng region who told me that every climate change disaster breaks their pipes, damages their drains, and disrupts their water. They say:

“we want nothing fancy; we just want water that runs, and toilets that work”.

FELLOW SOUTH AFRICANS,

Ngiyanicela, next year it is the local government elections. When you cast your vote remember who voted against this Amendment Bill. These people do not deserve your vote.



Your vote is a vote for dignity in the learning environment.

Your vote is a vote for service delivery.

Your vote is a vote for development and sustainability.

HONOURABLE CHAIPERSON,

Stakeholders warned the Standing Committee on Appropriations that the reduction of R343 million from the School Infrastructure Backlogs Grant (SIBG), meant to address the most severe infrastructure backlogs such as unsafe structures, is deeply concerning, if not a serious setback, considering that most learners in rural and township areas still attend schools with dangerous toilets, overcrowded classrooms, or buildings that do not meet basic norms and standards. Treasury must correct this going forward as our children cannot continue learning in unsafe buildings and unhygienic environments.

Stakeholders further warned the Standing Committee on Appropriations that students from poor and working-class backgrounds continue to place their hopes in the NSFAS to access the expensive corridors of higher learning, but the demand is outpacing the available resources. In 2025, the NSFAS saw 566,563 students qualify, far above what was planned, resulting in a funding shortfall affecting more than 140,000 students. The ANC is of the conviction that students from poor and working-class backgrounds carry the dreams of this nation, and Treasury must properly fund the NSFAS so that the future of these students can be brighter than their circumstances.



IN CONCLUSION,

Jabulani kumnandi kuba yi South African.

The ANC supports this Amendment Bill as it track-lists the interests of the poor and the rural and township areas that still carry faith in this glorious movement. Moreover, this Amendment Bill aligns with SONA 2025 pronouncements, the Medium-Term Development Plan priorities, and the ANC's Manifesto commitments to build capable municipalities and ensure quality education for every poor and deserving child.

SIYABONGA!