
THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2023

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

The sign † indicates the original language and [] directly thereafter indicates a translation.

[Hybrid Sitting held with some members present in the House and some in virtual attendance through Microsoft Teams]

The House met at 14:15.

The Speaker took the Chair and read the prayer.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER: Good afternoon, hon members. Before we proceed, I would like to remind members about some of the logistical arrangements. As has been our practice to date, hon members will participate in the Sitting of the House, both from here in the Chamber with the Presiding Officer and the Table staff and via Microsoft Teams. Our Standing Rules have accordingly been amended to accommodate such hybrid Sittings of the House.

Hon members experiencing challenges in connecting to the Sitting are requested to contact the WCPP ICT colleagues who will assist to resolve

their connectivity issues.

The quorum requirements for Sittings of the House are provided for in the Constitution and the Standing Rules. Hon members, unless there is an indication of unanimous concurrence, voting will be confined to members present in the House and on the hybrid system, who are entitled to cast their votes as per the ATC issued on 11 August 2020. Members present in the Chamber via Microsoft Teams have all the privileges and immunities imparted by law. Members who are considered out of order by the Presiding Officer will have their microphones muted and called to order.

The Serjeant-at-Arms will record members' attendance.

Hon members, in instances where these directives do not cover a particular eventuality, the Standing Rules must be applied, and in instances where the Rules cannot be applied, the ruling by the Presiding Officer is final.

Members, all microphones have been muted. However, for those hon members participating in the Sitting of the House via Microsoft Teams, you are requested to use the raised-hand functionality of the system when you desire to raise a point of order and I will recognise you. When an hon member in the Chamber wishes to raise a point of order, such an hon member may address the Presiding Officer as expected, but must mute their microphones when they have completed speaking.

Hon members, you are requested to please ensure that your microphones are unmuted when the Presiding Officer recognises you and when you are done speaking, please mute your microphones.

Hon members participating in the Sitting of the House via Microsoft Teams are requested not to sign into Microsoft Teams on more than one device unless the second device is utilised with earphones for Language Translation Services.

Hon members, the media have also been granted access to this Microsoft Teams meeting as guests of the WCPP. However, members of the press may not use the chat room or speak or activate their cameras while the Sitting is in progress. If an individual, who is not a member of the House, activates their microphone and video camera, such an individual will be exited from the Sitting immediately. I also wish to take this opportunity to request all our guests in the gallery to also observe the decorum of the House.

Hon members, all Language Translation Services are available in the Chamber as usual and on Microsoft Teams via the respective channels.

Hon members, I wish to remind you that no interjections are permitted during these hybrid Sittings, and to this end I wish to draw your attention to Rule 40 of our Standing Rules.

Hon members, please allow me an opportunity to welcome all the guests in the Gallery. Welcome to the Western Cape Provincial Parliament and welcome to the Sitting today. I would like to acknowledge the Consul General of Turkey. The CG, welcome to the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, it is always nice to have you visiting the WCPP. [Applause.]

Hon members, with that being said, I recognise the Chief Whip.

(Motion)

The CHIEF WHIP: Thank you, hon Speaker, I move without notice:

That the existing contract of the Registrar of Members' Interest, Advocate P Burgers, be extended on the same terms and conditions for a period of no longer than two months with effect from 1 December 2023.

I so move, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Chief Whip. Hon members, are there any objections to the motion being moved? No objections? Agreed to.

I recognise the hon Chief Whip.

(Motion)

The CHIEF WHIP: Thank you, hon Speaker, I move without notice:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 18, the hours of Sitting on Tuesday, 28 November 2023; Tuesday, 5 December 2023 and Thursday 7 December 2023 shall be from 10:00 to adjournment.

I so move, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Chief Whip. Hon members, are there any objections to the motion being moved? No objections? Agreed to.

I recognise the Chief Whip.

The CHIEF WHIP: Thank you, hon Speaker, I move without notice:

That the President's Motion in terms of Rule 20 that the Municipal Economic Review and Outlook receives precedence in today's Sitting.

I so move, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Chief Whip. Hon members, are there any objections to the motion? No objections? Agreed to.

Hon members, I now call upon the hon Minister of Finance and Economic

Opportunities to table the Municipal Economic Review and Outlook. The hon Minister of Finance, Minister Wenger. [Applause.]

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

MUNICIPAL ECONOMIC REVIEW AND OUTLOOK

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Hon Speaker, hon Premier, Cabinet Ministers, hon Leader of the Opposition members, and people of the Western Cape.

In September, I had the honour of tabling before this House the Provincial Economic Review and Outlook for 2022/23 which kicked off our annual budgetary processes and today I am extremely proud to share the invaluable insights contained in the Municipal Economic Review and Outlook for 2023/2024 or MERO, which drills down into key trends in our municipalities.

The MERO provides an in-depth look into each of the five District Municipalities, one Metropolitan Municipality and every one of the 24 Local Municipalities in the province, giving us the evidence we need to fully realise the many opportunities across the Western Cape, and this data is so important precisely because our municipalities are our building blocks for economic growth and by understanding the various trends in each district, each local municipality and the Metro, we are empowered with the information and evidence we need to deliver a better future in which we

create many more jobs, and with those jobs, hope for our residents.

Some of the innovations in the 2023/24 MERO include spatial tax employment data set out at sub-sector and town level, as well as new indicators including the number of grant recipients, levels of malnutrition, food poverty, literacy levels by race, Grade 3, 6 and 9 language and Maths pass rates, Grade 12 Bachelor pass rates as well as housing demand for each municipality in the Western Cape.

For us in the public sector, this information generates a fresh understanding of the spatial dynamics of our municipal economies, empowering Local and Provincial Government with the evidence needed to identify and address trends based on actual data so that we can take advantage of clear competitive advantages that will enable economic growth and job creation in their regions, and for the private sector, the MERO gives a concise analysis of investment potential, comparative advantage and economic specialisation of each local municipal area, providing data-led evidence to inform and drive private sector investments across the province for the benefit of all.

The insights and analysis shared in the MERO are a core part of our commitment to govern with purpose and productive and meaningful economic growth, which sits at the very heart of the Western Cape's Growth for Jobs Strategy reflecting our knowledge that it is the private sector that creates jobs and that Government's role is to make this as easy as possible.

We also know that our province is experiencing a substantial growth in population, increasing demand for basic services in education and health, as well as the demand for housing in the province.

Coupled with the ongoing energy crisis it is clear that the work underway in our municipalities towards jobs, growth, hope and dignity will require tough trade-offs for better results. That makes the importance of the information, data and analysis contained in this mighty but very beautiful team of books, especially important this year as we work to realise the promise of a thriving economy through our municipal building blocks for growth in the Western Cape, and so before I share some of the key trends that emerge from the data, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the Herculean effort put in by our public servants in the Provincial Treasury.

A special word of thanks goes to Shirley Robinson, Nadia Ringquest, Shannon Engel and Marita Jacobs for their impeccable work on the MERO under the guidance and leadership of our Acting Head Official of the Treasury, Mr Julinda Gantana.

Speaker, as we are all well aware, years of loadshedding, National Government corruption combined with the ballooning Public Sector Wage Bill and the continued failure of State-Owned Enterprises like Eskom and Transnet mean we face an unprecedented fiscal crisis. More than ever before, the Western Cape has pressed to do far more with much less to ensure that frontline services are delivered to those who need them the most.

For municipalities, our growth drivers, which are at the very coalface of service delivery that supports and enables the growth of local economies, the constrained fiscal environment and cross cutting socio-economic challenges require further improved planning, budgeting, cooperation and coordination between the various spheres of government, and so the MERO provides insights municipalities need to formulate targeted responses in their Municipal Integrated Development Plans, Spatial Development Frameworks, Local Economic Development Strategies and Budgets for evidence-based decision-making.

It also empowers us to identify what plans are working and where, so that the best outcomes can be replicated and non-performing interventions can be adjusted to improve their impact.

Although not unique to South Africa, the post COVID-19 global economy continues to face challenges, including supply chain disruptions, fuel and food price inflation, which are exacerbated by geopolitical tensions. We are not immune to these impacts, but here in South Africa we have the additional crippling burden of loadshedding now running for a quarter of a century.

In spite of this, we continue to see job creation and growth improve, reflecting the province's adaptability and resilience, reinforcing the importance of this Government's commitment to our priorities of jobs, safety and well-being.

Projections for population growth indicate an upturn in the growth rate during 2023, which will settle at this higher level over the medium term. It is vital that population growth is factored into the planning and budgeting of all spheres of government, because it will have an impact on service delivery, especially in frontline services and housing demand.

Loadshedding continues to place significant stress on municipal finances, which are already constrained and reliant to a large extent on revenue generated through the provision of electricity. Municipal budgets, particularly their capital budgets, are thus dependent on financial assistance in the form of grants and transfers from the National and Provincial Government.

With the national fiscus under substantial pressure translating into cuts to municipal grants, it is more critical than ever that municipalities explore alternative financing for infrastructure developments and take a proactive role in championing energy sustainability aimed at stimulating economic growth and employment opportunities.

The national energy crisis is one of the country's most pressing problems and in the Western Cape with our abundance of natural resources, renewable energy presents us with an opportunity for economic growth.

The benefits of attracting renewable energy investment are twofold, ensuring

a stable supply of power that businesses need to maintain and expand operations and the opportunity to turn to far more sustainable energy production methods that secure electricity supply in the long run and transform the sector to make sure every resident and business is enabled to build their skills and jobs towards a brighter and greener future.

Determined work is therefore underway to make sure that no municipality is left behind in our quest to be more energy resilient over the short, medium and longer term.

Speaker, turning to our provincial and regional economic indicators, we saw great momentum in our post COVID-19 provincial economy last year and the MERO details our expectation that Provincial Gross Domestic Product, GDP, were slow across districts in 2023, but by 2024 forecasts reflect that economic expansion will exceed pre-COVID levels in all regions outside of the Cape Metro, giving a clear indication of just how valuable municipalities are as our building blocks of growth.

Gross Domestic Product per Region or GDPR performance is normalising to pre-COVID-19 levels, and all districts outside of the Cape Metro have grown and increased their contribution to GDPR in 2022.

The same is true for contribution to employment. In 2022 the three municipalities that contributed the most to GDPR growth were the Cape Metro, George and Drakenstein, with Langeberg, Kannaland and the Breede

Valley exhibiting the highest GDP growth in the province. By 2022, GDP in all districts and the Metro had fully recovered economic losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is very welcome news and I congratulate each of these regions.

We also saw the unemployment rate decrease from 28,8% in 2021 to 28,6% in 2022 in the City of Cape Town, with both the labour force participation and absorption rates increasing in the same period. The same impressive rebounds and increases in employment, as well as decreases in unemployment can be seen in the West Coast with just over 10 800 new jobs created between 2021 and 2022, with a decrease of 0,7% in unemployment.

The Overberg saw an increase of nearly 9000 new jobs between 2021 and 2022, and a 1,3% decrease in unemployment. The Garden Route District saw a decrease of 1,2% in unemployment and in the Central Karoo unemployment decreased by ,9% over the same period. In every single district across the province, as well as in the Cape Metro both the labour force participation rates and the labour absorption rates increased between 2021 and 2022, showing that more people are not only available and looking for work, but are also finding work in the Western Cape.

These trends, combined with the recent data released by Statistics South Africa in the most recent Quarterly Labour Force Survey, show that our job figures for 2023 look even more promising.

While we continue to work hard to enable more job creation in the Western Cape, it is encouraging to see low rural unemployment rates with four out of six regions having unemployment rates below 20%, with the Cape Winelands and Overberg Districts under 15%.

Speaker, the Western Cape is working. From the SARS data we see that in the Cape Winelands the West Coast and Garden Route Districts are growing. The growing of perennial crops, such as apples, pears, grapes, citrus, wheat and canola are responsible for the majority of formal jobs. In fact, perennial crop production accounts for 5,6% of all provincial fixed term employment opportunities of more than 101,000 jobs.

The top export from the Cape Winelands last year was citrus to the value of R8,1 billion destined mainly for the Netherlands.

The Garden Route produced apples, pears and quinces to the value of R1,6 billion, mostly bound for Norway as the top export destination, while in the Overberg the same products worth R817,5 million were mainly exported to the United Kingdom and nearly R22 million worth of sweetened milk and cream being exported from the Central Karoo with their top export market being our neighbour, Namibia.

We can see from the MERO, and I am sure Minister Meyer will agree, that our world-class agricultural goods are sought after globally, giving us the opportunity to truly unleash our municipal building blocks of growth by

leveraging this sector to contribute even more to economic growth and job creation.

This is precisely why we are determined to get the Port of Cape Town functioning optimally and precisely why it is high time that Transnet urgently invests in port infrastructure and equipment needed to support the current and future expansion of our world-renowned in demand agricultural produce, because when our Port works, so too does our economy, enabling the creation of many more jobs for residents in the province and country.

When looking at the skills landscape we see an apparent rise in the demand for skilled labour, driven by technological advancements and the continued structural shift of the Western Cape economy towards tertiary sector activities. This trend underscores the importance of upskilling initiatives and reaffirms the work the Western Cape Government is achieving in growing the business process outsourcing or BPO Sector. Going forward, prioritising education and learner support should continue to be a strategic priority given the labour market's increasing skill requirements.

Moving on to tourism, Speaker, the MERO details the strong performance of tourism as an especially strong building block for growth in our municipalities. We have seen the very impressive recovery of the tourism sector overall, contributing greatly to economic growth and job creation. Tourist spending as a proportion of GDP is increasing in all districts, and in the Cape Metro with the exception of the Central Karoo District, which saw a

decrease in tourism spending as a share of GDP.

In the Cape Metro, the tourism sector experienced a substantial growth of 191% in international bed nights between 2021 and 2022 while domestic bed nights decreased by 0,3% in the same period. The majority of visitors to the West Coast are domestic travellers 84,7%.

We are seeing that international market is showing impressive growth with an increase of 195% to bed nights between 2021 and 2022 in this region. Similarly, most visitors to the Garden Routes are domestic, despite domestic nights contracting by 3,7% between 2021 and 2022. This district also showed an impressive growth in international visitors with 193% increase in international bed nights. The growth in both these regions reflects the determined work that the province is doing to ensure that visitors stay longer, travel further and spend more forex across our region.

Of note is the fact that 44,9% of overnight visitors to the Central Karoo were international, and international bed nights grew by 194% between 2021 and 2022.

However, we are seeing the impact of the cost of living crisis on domestic tourism with domestic tourism spending as a share of GDP decreasing between 2020 and 2022 from 13% to 9,6%. This clearly shows the impact of the ever increasing cost of living and why I remain on my mission to engage with Minister Motsoaledi to ensure that our Visa Regime becomes an enabler

of economic growth and job creation rather than the unnecessary obstacle it currently is.

On infrastructure, Speaker, as much as we believe that it is the private sector that creates jobs, we know that Government has a vital role to play, to support and enable that growth. The Public Sector Infrastructure Spend is a central pillar of economic development, a key measure of the health of an economy as well as the commitment of a Government to supporting the future growth of an area.

The utilisation of spatial data and strategic planning is essential to guarantee that infrastructure projects are well suited to their respective regions so that we can spend wisely to realise the best results for residents.

Overall and over the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, our District and Metro municipalities will be collectively spending R56,1 billion on infrastructure, including wastewater management, energy sources and water management, human settlements, transport and public works.

In the City of Cape Town alone infrastructure spend budgeted for the current 2023/24 financial year is R11 billion with a strong focus on wastewater, road transport, energy sources and water management.

In the West Coast District in 2023/24, R12,9 million has been allocated for water management infrastructure in the Matzikama municipal area and a total

of 100 MTEF projects planned for the District over the next three years, valued at R2,3 billion. With the Garden Route District being susceptible to drought, George, Bitou and Oudtshoorn Municipalities have made water management a priority, allocating R380 000 million, R27 million and R18 million respectively.

At the same time, Hessequa Municipality has allocated the highest proportion of its 2023/24 Infrastructure Budget to energy sources. That is R24,2 million, and overall for the region, municipalities are spending R4,8 billion over the MTEF in the region, clearly building for growth.

Other critical infrastructure investments are detailed in the MERO and across our municipal building blocks of growth of the budget allocations for the maintenance and upgrades of road infrastructure, which have been prioritised due to their role and supporting and enabling mobility, trade and tourism, and in the Cape Winelands a total of 151 projects are planned over the 2023 MTEF totalling R5,5 billion with the focus on transport and public works and human settlements.

As we have witnessed recently, we cannot ignore the impact of climate-related disasters on our road infrastructure and more will be shared on the Province's response during the Adjustment Budget that I will deliver next week on Tuesday, 28 November.

I would like to commend my colleagues in Local Government and

Infrastructure under the leadership of Ministers Bredell and Simmers in their coordinated and swift response to the most pressing needs of our provincial communities and economy.

Speaker, when we look at measures to improve the well-being of residents as well as the impact of key interventions to address income inequality, standard of living and the like, we look at the Gini Coefficient as well as the Human Development Index (HDI) as a composite measure of three basic aspects of human development – health, knowledge and standard of living.

Income inequality in the Cape Metro, measured by the Gini Coefficient, is on par with the province at 0,601 in 2022 and better than that of South Africa, which sits at 0,618 indicating that there is less inequality in the Western Cape than in the country as a whole.

Looking at longer-term trends, it is encouraging to see that the Gini Coefficient declined in the Cape Metro area and the province between 2019 and 2022. The Human Development Index, which measures health, education and standard of living of the Cape Metro at 0,734, exceeds that of the province at 0,722 and the rest of the country at 0,654, indicating that residents are better off in the Cape Metro area.

In the West Coast District, after declining in 2021, the HDI improved in 2022 but remains lower than recorded before the COVID-19 pandemic due to the slow recovery of income. The recovery of HDI in all regions has been

impacted by the slow income recovery apart from the Central Karoo where HDI is higher than what it was prior to the pandemic.

While levels of poverty remain a concern in the West Coast we have seen positive movements in the right direction, with the proportion of people below the food poverty line declining from 31,7% in 2021 to 30,7% in 2022.

Overall, it remains lower than the overall provincial food poverty level of 32,9% and the national food poverty level of 35,3%.

In 2022 income inequality in the Cape Winelands was lower when compared to the province, with only the Stellenbosch municipal area exceeding the NDP 2030 target of 0,6 with the Gini Coefficient of 0,607. While income inequality in the Overberg slightly exceeded that of the province, income inequality has steadily declined since 2020 in all municipal areas of that district. This district also had fewer people below the food poverty line than the province.

Income inequality in the Central Karoo is comparatively low, with a Gini Coefficient of 0,580 in 2022. This region also saw a decline in the number of indigent households in 2022, while the proportion of people below the food poverty line declined to 27,9% in 2022. This date is perhaps what makes the MERO so valuable for us in the Government. The work being done in our municipalities does matter to households and families and the evidence is reflecting improvements in standard of living across the Western Cape.

Equally important are education outcomes, as Minister Maynier will agree, and I commend and welcome the improvements in learner-to-teacher ratios across the province, despite the rapid increase in learner numbers.

We have also seen continuous improvement in retention rates across the province. The Cape Metro, West Coast and Cape Winelands District recorded a reduction in their learner-teacher ratio, which is admirable considering all three recorded an increase in learners in 2022, and in the Cape Metro at 30,4 learners per teacher the ratio is lower than the level desired by the Department of Basic Education of 35-to-one for ordinary high schools and 40-to-one for ordinary primary schools and while the Cape Metro recorded the highest bachelor pass rates in the province at 42,4%, we are concerned with the declining Matric pass rates in the West Coast Garden Route and Central Karoo.

Other positive education outcomes include the Grade 10 to 12 learner retention rate in the Western Cape, which increased from 67,8% in 2020 to 75,3% in 2022. This means our children are staying in school for longer.

We noted learner-to-teacher ratios in the Overberg declining to 29,6 in 2022 despite a substantial increase in learners in 2022, 1469, most of which are in the Theewaterskloof and Overstrand municipal areas. Other education improvements include higher pass rates in Languages and Mathematics for Grades 3 and 6 in most municipal areas in the Overberg.

In the Garden Route, the increase in learner enrolment was met with an increase in teachers, resulting in a marginal decline in the learner teacher rate in 2022.

Other positive education outcomes include improving learner retention rates in all municipal areas, except in Hessequa and Mossel Bay, and finally, the Central Karoo District recorded positive changes in several education indicators, including increased learner enrolment, a decline in the learner teacher ratio and an increase in the Grade 10 to 12 learner retention rate.

Speaker, when we turn to key health outcomes across the Western Cape regions, the MERO uses maternal mortality and data on teenage pregnancies to show progress. In the Western Cape as a whole, delivery rates of females between the ages of 10 and 19 remain stable at 11,5% in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 years, and we welcome the news that in each of the Cape Winelands, Overberg, Garden Route and Central Karoo Districts, teenage pregnancies have decreased.

However, teenage pregnancy remains a concern in the West Coast District as well as in Witzenberg and the Cape Winelands, which had the highest proportion of teenage births in the district in 2022 at 16,3%. However, this was a 0,7% lower than in 2021.

There has also been some concerning increases in maternal mortality rate in the Garden Route and specifically in Mossel Bay. In the Central Karoo

District a sharp increase in neonatal mortality from 7,5 deaths per thousand live births in 2021, to 23,2 deaths per thousand live births in 2022, as well as an increase in maternal death rates. It has, however, been encouraging to see the declining rates of maternal mortality in the Cape Metro, Cape Winelands and West Coast Districts, which Minister Mbombo will welcome and I am sure will leverage the learning from these districts to replicate support in the regions where maternal deaths have increased.

The Cape Metro area recorded an increase in the low birth-weight rate and an increase in the number of children affected by severe acute malnutrition, which is aligned with the elevated levels of food poverty prevalent in the Cape Metro area. While in the West Coast District, all municipal areas recorded a reduction in the number of children with severe acute malnutrition, except for the Matzikama municipal area, which increased from 1,2 per thousand children under five to 3,1 per thousand children under five.

Speaker, this only strengthens our resolve to do even more with our diminishing resources for the families that are making the Western Cape their home.

Turning to a topic which keeps us all up at night, especially Premier Winde and Minister Allen, is the safety of our residents, communities and businesses in the Western Cape. [Interjections.]

The rise in the incidence of crime in the Western Cape remains a concern

because we know that it impacts the quality of life of our communities...

[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: ...our elderly are murdered... [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order, members!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...and compromises... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order members!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...all of which has the potential to derail socio-economic improvements. MERO shows that some inroads are being made to reduce categories of crime, and in the 2022/23 year, the crime rate in the Cape Metro remained 2,9% lower than that of pre-pandemic levels. However, a cause for significant concern is the fact that drug-related crime has increased in almost all municipalities across the Western Cape between 2021 and 2022. The data and MERO highlights the inextricable link between joblessness, poverty, and the incidence of drug related crimes. As a complex and multifaceted problem, combating the scourge as well as crime overall requires an all of society plan of action and will remain a priority of this Government, as it should be a priority for a National Government holding, policing and safety purse strings.

While the MERO reflects the continued challenges in terms of joblessness, safety and well-being, it also shows us the very real and present opportunities we have to build a pathway to prosperity.

Only by working together with Local, District and Provincial Government, as well as the private sector can we improve the foundations of growth, unlock opportunities to drive economic growth and create jobs across our province.

It is therefore my pleasure to table the Municipal Economic Review and Outlook for the 2023/24 year in this Western Cape Provincial Parliament.

I would like to thank the Local Government Budget Office within the Provincial Treasury for their immense effort in putting this remarkable research report together and especially for their commitment to making the information easily accessible through some really beautiful design elements, layouts and some superb infographics.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude as well to the Local Government, public finance team, Steven Kenyon, Thobelani Ntshingila, Isac Tsie and Dian Cronje for the support they provide day in and day out to all our municipalities. We appreciate deeply your hard work, and to the entire Provincial Team Finance under the leadership of Acting Head Official Julinda Gantana, for the immeasurable contribution made to supporting municipalities with this data so that they can continue to be our building blocks for growth, prosperity and hope, and of course, to all our Mayors,

Mayco members and municipal officials, who are on the frontline of service delivery in the Western Cape. Thank you for all that you do... [Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: What about the George Old Mutual investment?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...to support our municipalities' building blocks for growth... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order members, order!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...of a thriving economy for the people of the Western Cape. Thank you. [Interjection.] [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. Hon members, the municipal... [Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: What about the Hessequa Mayor?

The SPEAKER: Hon Dugmore, I am on the floor. Thank you very much, hon Minister. The Municipal Economic Review and Outlook will now be referred

to the relevant Standing Committee for consideration. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, we now move on to Interpellations in terms of Rule 197. Hon Dugmore, hon members! We have now moved on, we are now at Interpellations in terms of Rule 197. I recognise the hon Premier.

INTERPELLATIONS

1. Mr M Kama asked Mr A R Winde, Premier:

In respect of the appointment of the Provincial Initiation Coordination Committee (PICC):

- (1) What is the composition of the PICC;
- (2) whether all the initiation forums were consulted before the committee was appointed?

The PREMIER: Thank you. Thank you very much, Speaker and thank you very much to the hon Kama for the question.

Of course this question relates to a piece of Legislation, the Act 2 of 2021 Customary Initiation Act and Question 1, what is the composition of the PICC. The Western Cape PICC has been constituted in terms of the law and has the following members. 11(3)(a) that is the first section of the Act. This designation is the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders and of course this is because in this law on page 22 under item 3 it says:

"In a province where a Provincial House has not been established and where no traditional leaders have been recognised but initiation takes place within the province..."

And so it goes on to direct how this process ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order members! Order!

The PREMIER: So in that Section the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Nkosi Joyi and Morena Molefe are the two individuals that have been nominated by that National House to this Committee.

Then 13(3)(b) the designator is myself and that actually comes via the MECs in the Province so the first one is Ms Dingayo. That is a Director in the Provincial Archives Services and of course that comes through Minister Marais' Department and then of course through SALGA and the Department of Local Government. This is a policy director, Mr Dlwengu, and he comes from the Policy and Strategic Support in the Department of Local Government.

11(3)(c), that is the South African Local Government Association themselves, who also have the opportunity to nominate and their Councillor, Mickey Plato-Mentoor from Theewaterskloof Municipality is the incumbent and Councillor Carl Punt from the City of Cape Town is the incumbent.

Then, under 11(3)(d), the Provincial Minister of Health can nominate and that is Ms Shameem Modack-Robertson, District Manager Emergency Medical Services is the incumbent.

Also the Provincial Minister of Community Safety nominates and that is Mr Vuyani Mbaqa, Deputy Director Regional Manager Garden Route Community Police Relations Unit and then lastly 11(3)(e), Interim Traditional Health Practitioner Council of South Africa nominates the last seat and that is Mr Lukolo Mgetana (?) and he is a Traditional Health Practitioner of the Western Cape Province.

And then Question 2, whether all the initiation forums were consulted before the Committee was appointed. Section 11(3) the Act provides that the Committee is appointed by the designated representatives and there is no statutory requirement for consultation with provincial structures or forums before the Committee members are designated under this act.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Hon Premier, I recognise the hon Kama.

Mr M KAMA: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, allow me to comment by conveying a message on behalf of the Western Cape Initiation Forums' Executive Council, an entity comprising of 39 Forums in the Western Cape and it is truly recognised by CONTRALESA.

The Council, in its memorandum addressed to the ANC, has expressed frustration at the lack of response from both the Premier's Office and the MEC, despite attempts to communicate.

Permit me, to quote directly from their memorandum and I quote:

"We tried to communicate to Premier's Office and MEC of DCAS but we do not get any response from both of them. We decided to communicate with your office because we need your quick intervention and assistance since we are in the middle of the summer season...

An HON MEMBER: Did your office...?

Mr M KAMA: ...and all the forums took a decision that we will not submit any paperwork from our side, although we did complete the forms as required, but we will keep them until we get a response from the Province."

And it is only... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order members! Order!

Mr M KAMA: It is only, Speaker, after I had met with the forum and communicated with the Department that this morning they received all their

responses from the letters that they have been writing, because this matter is on the agenda today.

In response to the Council's concerns, the Provincial Government, through DCAS has issued threats of stern action, should the forums fail to submit.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr M KAMA: The recent closure of four initiation schools in the province is a direct consequence of the Premier and the Provincial Government's failure to engage meaningfully with the traditional leaders and initiation forums who are custodians of *ulwaluko* in this province.

I am also made aware that some of these leaders from the forums are now criminalised and summoned to court as from tomorrow, because apparently they have failed to submit applications to the Province.

It is crucial to emphasise that the recent closure of initiation schools are not solely due to their alleged illegality, as asserted by the Department. Instead, these actions highlight the broader issue of the DA Government's disregard for communication and its undermining of traditional leaders because the excuse they give that they did not open the season or they opened before the season started, it is in the very same emails that were written to this Government and it never responded, where the forums said that they would want to open earlier because there is a high volume of young boys that want

to go to the school this year and for the safety of these kids we need to open earlier and ensure that no lives are lost.

In their memorandum, the 39 initiation forums are said that they were left uninformed and unconsulted during the appointment of the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Team, and the Premier confirms because it treats initiation as just a matter of reading the Act... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Kama.

Mr M KAMA: ...when it is about preserving the culture of the people who are inhabitants of this province.

An HON MEMBER: Ja, [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Kama. Your time for your first opportunity has expired.

Mr M KAMA: Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: I now recognise the hon Fry.

Mr T FRY: Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr T FRY: I thank the Premier for his response on the matter and for his Government's work in relation to this issue.

An HON MEMBER: Like Helen Zille...

Mr T FRY: In our country far too many of our youth die or suffer debilitating injuries during the traditional initiation process and often as a result of entirely preventable circumstances. We know, however, that the Western Cape Government, and in particular the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, has worked hand-in-glove with the traditional leaders to make the practice safer and more accessible, while preserving the deep significance and traditional values of initiation ceremonies.

As a result of these efforts, the Western Cape remains one of the safest provinces in South Africa when it comes to initiation. In fact, recent weeks has seen the Western Cape Government... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr T FRY: ...take action against four unsafe and illegal initiation schools...

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr T FRY: ...likely preventing the injury or death of initiates. With that in

mind I would like to ask the Premier to elaborate on the support which the Western Cape Government provides to initiation schools in the Western Cape and the results of these measures. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Fry. I recognise the hon Kama.

Mr M KAMA: Hon Speaker, it is an apartheid style to criminalise people that are raising genuine issues.

An HON MEMBER: Yes.

Mr M KAMA: The two people who are appointed as traditional leaders in this Council that are supposed to oversee the initiation school in this province, one is from Eastern Cape and one is from KZN and the people of this province are only making calls [Interjections] that they must be recognised in their province and given the opportunity to oversee the initiation, but *Somlomo*, †namhlanje sizibona siphoxa...sizibona sixoxa lemicimbi yamasiko nabantu abangenaziduko nabangazi wathewethwe ngamsiko ethu. Lo nto idala yokuba isiko lethu lingahlonitshwa yaye linyashwe ngoku ngulo rhulumente olawulayo kweli phondo.

[But Speaker, we find ourselves discussing issues about our culture with people who do not possess clan names and with people who do not understand a single aspect of our culture. That is why our culture is not being respected by the government ruling this province.]

As a result of the DA Government's actions, in particular the Stellenbosch Municipality's action in Idas Valley, the initiation forum took the Municipality to Court. Judgments were made in favour of the Forum. Eventually, they ran out of funds to go to Court again, resulting in them agreeing to be relocated into a different site outside of Franschhoek.

As a result of this a few days back and initiate died in the province. The death of this young man is in the hands of Stellenbosch Municipality and it is in the hands of this Government because the distance that they travel from Stellenbosch to Franschhoek, outside Franschhoek, made it difficult for the people who were to respond when the help was called. May his soul rest in peace, but not in vain.

Hon Speaker, the Customary Initiation Act, 2021, Section 18.1 underscores the significance of partnerships between the Provincial Government, the Municipality, the principal of initiation schools within the province and the traditional leaders. Regrettably, this collaborative approach has been neglected by this Government, showcasing a disturbing pattern of undermining not only our traditional leaders, but also *ulwaluko*.

Secondly, Section 20(1) makes it clear that traditional leaders bear the ultimate responsibility of overseeing initiation practices within the jurisdiction of their Kingship and Queenship councils.

The Premier's failure to implement Section 18 and 20 of the Customary

Initiation Act indicates a lack of due diligence in recognising and respecting the vital role of traditional leadership in initiation forums as custodians of *ulwaluko*.

I wish to bring to the attention the Council's memorandum and urge the Premier to address the outlined grievances, particular with regard to the appointment of the PICC. Additionally, there is a pressing request for the provision of safety clothing, protective equipment, and urging municipalities to supply water and emergency assistance to initiation schools. Of paramount importance, the initiation forums call for the rezoning of all initiation sites in the province as heritage sites.

Lastly, a critical question remains unanswered. What has become of the boys... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Kama, please conclude. Your time has expired.

Mr M KAMA: Yes, what have become of the boys who were in the closed initiation schools? Furthermore, when can we expect the Premier to engage with the leaders... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Kama.

Mr M KAMA: ...to ensure these issues are addressed and not engaged with on paper, but making ... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Kama, your time has expired.

Mr M KAMA: [indistinct, speaking simultaneously] [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Kama, please take your seat. Hon Kama, please take your seat.

Mr M KAMA: Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much and thank you to the hon Kama for bringing this debate here. The hon Kama knows very well that this Minister, Minister Marais and her Department...

Mr C DUGMORE: So why did you [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Dugmore!

The PREMIER: ...work very, very hard to make sure that this specific process is followed according to the rule of law and we work really hard [Interjection] to make sure that we protect lives in this process. I am absolutely on record in this House over years to say that one of the things that I... [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. Hon members, interjections are allowed, but this running commentary cannot be entertained or will not be entertained any further. When there is a member on the floor, please allow that member to have his or her opportunity to make their submission or deliver their contribution.

Hon members, this is the first time that I am raising this. Can I please ask for your indulgence? We have a long day ahead of us. Hon Premier, my apologies. You may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker. I have been on record over many years in this House talking about specifically various cultures and rights of passage and if you link that through to even the Safety Plan, you know that I think in many areas we are missing cultural activities, because it is about men, rights of passage. Those kind of things are how we actually get to the causalities and deal with gender-based violence and crime. {Interjections.} That is actually what we should be promoting and we work very hard at this.

I also want to point out to the hon Kama the Regulations and the legislation. He is a legislator. He is elected to serve here. He must understand the law and these Committees. [Interjections.] He knows! He knows very well and he comes here and he talks about two individuals that are not from this province. It is his ANC National Government... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: And the National Office that actually appoints them...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order members!

The PREMIER: ...because they have not finished.

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. [Pause.] Hon members, have you done? Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, because it is the ANC that have been dragging their feet [Interjections.] over many years on enabling the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders for Khoi-San. It is the ANC that actually denied the First Nation Status at the United Nations. [Interjections.] It is the ANC that said that, not us. They are the ones where the cause comes from, and get that sorted out so that we can actually have provincially appointed individuals, not through the National Office. He comes here to complain about that. He must understand the law. [Interjections.]

Second of all, Speaker, he must also understand that there are mechanisms for disputes. There are mechanisms for disputes within this law. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. Hon members, the Premier is on the floor responding. If you do not like the response, I mean we cannot adjudicate that, but can I please ask that you allow the Premier to respond.

An HON MEMBER: He is not responding.

The SPEAKER: I mean you... Hon members, I am on the floor. [Pause.]

Can I please ask for your indulgence, while a member is on the floor to allow that member to make their submission?

There are Rules that guides this, the proceedings of this House. Can you please adhere to them? Hon Kama, is that a point of order?

Mr M KAMA: Yes, Speaker. I think in line with the ruling you had just made, I think it would be important to advise the Premier that in terms of the Rules he is supposed to address this House through you, because it is him, he keeps on pointing at us. That provokes their responses that he is getting.

Hon MEMBERS: Ja...

Mr M KAMA: So, if he does not know the Rules, what, how much more is he really reading there?

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Kama. Hon Premier, may I remind you that you must please address the House through the Chair. Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker, I apologise and through you the ANC must realise that they have dragged their feet. They are the ones at the United Nations that said they did not recognise the First Nation Status of the Khoi-San in this province. They are the ones... [Interjections.]

Now, Speaker, I am addressing you and the noise continues. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, you may... [Interjections.]

Hon members! Hon members! Hon Premier, please switch off your microphone. [Pause.] [Interjections.]

Hon Mvimbi, you have been a member of this House for nearly five years and for this term of office. If you want to address the Chair, please rise and address the Chair.

Hon Members, hon Marais, I will recognise you, please take your seat.

Hon members, this continuous running commentary is not going to be allowed. I have allowed interjections because interjections are allowed, but

the minute you drown out the speaker with running commentary, it is against the Rules and that will not be tolerated. So please take this for all members that this is the last warning for the remainder of this Sitting.

Hon Marais, you may address me.

Mr P J MARAIS: Speaker, I think members should start respecting this House. [Interjections.] That is not the circus, but we have this standard of this House is equal to a circus and they disrespect the Chair. Now you asked me to leave this House. [Interjections.]

Ms R WINDVOGEL: Listen to you! [Inaudible.] [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr P J MARAIS: Because I did not, I did not... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order, members!

Mr P J MARAIS: Speaker, you must treat the ANC the way you treat all other parties. [Interjections.] When I did not comply by your Ruling you asked me to leave the House. Ask them to leave the House now! [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, members! Hon members! Hon Members, there was a member on the floor on a point of order. Hon Marais, that was not a point of

order. Hon Mvimbi, you may address me.

Mr P J MARAIS: I am rising on a point of order, sir. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Marais, please take your seat.

Mr P J MARAIS: I rise on a point of order, sir.

The SPEAKER: Hon Marais, I have recognised... [Interjections.] Hon Marais, please take your seat.

Mr L L MVIMBI: You are not a one-man party...

The SPEAKER: Hon Mvimbi, please take your seat. Order, members!

Members, if there is a member on the floor on a point of order they are entitled to do so, whether you like the point of order or not, they are entitled to do so. [Interjections.] Hon Mvimbi?

Mr L L MVIMBI: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. In order not to be...

The SPEAKER: Order, Premier, there is a member on the floor. I will recognise you thereafter. Hon Mvimbi, what is your point of order?

Mr L L MVIMBI: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. In order not to be out

of order, hon Speaker, I rise in terms of Section 44 of the Rules of Order, which is the issue of irrelevance and repetition. The issue we are dealing with here, hon Speaker, is the issue of initiation, not First Nation so we would like to please request the Premier to be relevant. The issue that is at hand, it is a culture and a tradition that we respect that actually some of us honour. We have actually lived through it. We know it. When we speak about it, we feel it. So we will also like the Premier to stick to it and actually treat it with the utmost respect that it actually deserved. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Mvimbi. I note your point. Hon, I will listen carefully, with the noise, if you allow me to. Premier, please just take note of the point of order. Hon Premier, is that a point of order or can I recognise you to continue?

The PREMIER: ...I was just listening to the... and I heard people actually calling this member from this side of the House a racist.

Mr P J MARAIS: Correct, ja. [Interjections.]

The PREMIER: Now of course...

Mr P J MARAIS: Ja!

The PREMIER:... I do not think that that is part of the decorum of this

House.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, hon members, hon members! There was a point of order. Hon Premier, I will consult Hansard and I will revert back to the House. [Interjections.] Hon Kama?

Mr M KAMA: No, thank you very much, Speaker. Can we also request that as you come back with the ruling, you also advise us as to how do we refer to someone who called us refugees in this House when we are citizens of this one nation and he never apologised for that. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Kama, I am not going to get into a debate on that. You cannot rise on a point of order being a point of order, I have ruled on that. [Interjections.] I will come back to the House after I have consulted Hansard.

Hon Sayed, is that a point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: [No audible reply.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon members, can I once again ask your indulgence that we continue? I recognise the Premier.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker and the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders is the body that nominates two individuals

that I have mentioned under 11(3)(a). [Interjections.]

I also want to point out to the hon Kama that disputes must be addressed and lodged through the WCPICC. [Interjection.] The WCPICC is also the organisation that has laid criminal charges against illegal initiation schools and is supported by DCAS and, of course, we are very, very mindful of lives that are lost across our country during this period, and we have to make sure that we protect our citizens in this process.

I also want to say to the hon Kama, that if you would please just give me the detail on these organisations... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please conclude, your time has expired.

The PREMIER: ...and I will definitely investigate. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Premier. Hon members, that brings us to the end of Interpellation 1.

We will now move on to Interpellation 2 and I recognise the hon Minister of Education, Minister Maynier.

2. Mr M K Sayed to ask Mr D J Maynier, Minister of Education:

Whether all learners have been placed at schools for the 2024 academic

year?

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Thank you, hon Speaker. No. As the hon member is aware the admission cycle is ongoing. He of course will also be aware that extremely late applications continue to arrive and of course, hon Speaker, the hon member must be aware that we have been dealt a devastating blow by National Government.

The Department of Basic Education has announced a R1,6 billion cut to the Education Infrastructure Grant and of course what makes the cut particularly devastating, is that for the first time ever the cut is made within the financial year and thus takes effect immediately at exactly the time when demand for placement is highest.

Our province, other provinces are also speaking about the consequences of these devastating cuts to provincial education budgets. The Eastern Cape Premier, Oscar Mabuyane, said just last month:

"Teachers may have to teach more students, which could make it difficult to provide individualised attention to students. Schools may have to cut back on programmes and resources, such as extracurricular activities and supplies. Teachers may have to work longer hours and take on more responsibilities, which could lead to burnout and decreased quality of education."

My colleague, Mbale Frazer, the Education MEC in KwaZulu Natal said just earlier this month:

"We have been frank and transparent, but the challenges we face in the Department are primarily due to financial constraints. The unfunded 2023/2024 Wage Bill exacerbated our situation, leaving the Department short by about R3,6 billion this year."

She then goes on to say that:

"You have seen first-hand the impact that this has had on our schools and our districts."

And, hon Speaker, the consequences that she refers to include schools not being able to even print exam papers for their learners, but despite this devastating blow we are going to fight hard to expand the number of places available at schools in the Western Cape by implementing our Rapid School Build Programme, where we aim to deliver at least 608 additional classrooms for the 2024 school year.

We understand that this is a stressful and especially anxious period for our parents. As a department we are asking parents to work with us as we try to accommodate children as soon as possible.

We are exploring all available options to find a place for these learners for

the start of the school year. Our officials and schools are working hard under intense pressure to make sure that we find a place for every child. We will leave no stone, no stone unturned in our effort to place every learner and we will continue to work hard to finalise placement for all remaining learners in the Western Cape. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. I recognise the hon member Sayed.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Firstly allow me to welcome the various guests that are here watching this particular Sitting, the various Palestinian solidarity activists, as well as the Consul General of Turkey in Cape Town, Mr Sinan Yeşildağ.

I rise, hon Speaker, to address a critical issue plaguing the Western Cape. A crisis that threatens the future of thousands of young people. The perennial problem of unplaced learners in our schools, which this Administration and now the MEC has just shown us, completely deny.

As we approach January 2024 the spectre of unplaced learners looms large yet again, casting a shadow over the educational landscape of our province. It is disheartening to note that this Provincial Government has been quick to shift blame on to applicants, citing late submissions as a primary cause of this crisis, speaking about budget, but we find out that it is poor

administration if you look at the issues case by case.

However, our offices have been inundated with complaints from concerned parents who applied on time and who followed due process, yet their children remain unplaced in schools. The blame game must cease and accountability must be shouldered.

The heart of the issue, hon Speaker, lies in the inherent disparities within the Western Cape's education system. Rather than providing fair opportunities for all, this particular system seems designed to cater only for the privileged few predominantly White, leaving Black learners with substandard education in overcrowded classrooms, bereft of basic amenities. This systemic injustice must be addressed urgently.

The parents of a learner, Kamva Mtana, applied timeously and correctly for Grade 8 for 2024 at three different schools, and the application was denied at all the schools. She appealed and received the same response. The child does not know what to do or where to go as she does not have a place in school for next year.

This Government is completely divorced from the realities of our people on the ground. This should not be happening in the Western Cape, a province that received R830 million for its Infrastructure Budget last year and embarked on what the MEC speaks about as a Rapid School Build Programme, to deliver 842 classrooms and an additional 26 000 placement

spaces.

However, hon Speaker, this Infrastructure Budget has been mismanaged. The DA squandered the opportunity by resorting to temporary solutions ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Sayed, please conclude. Your time has expired.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...such as prefab and Moladi schools, instead of building permanent solutions. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Sayed. That concludes your first opportunity. I recognise the hon member Baartman.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Thank you, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, we have seen the Minister and the Department working diligently to improve capacity in our schools and to build new classrooms and schools in terms of the number of places that we require and that needs to be available. This is despite looming National Budget cuts and, hon Chair, I am going to actually quote from page 15 of the Division of Revenue Amendment Bill (B33-2023), which was tabled in the Budget Committee this morning by the National Treasury, and on page 15 you will see every single province getting budget cuts on the Education Infrastructure Grant.

You will see particularly at the Western Cape an approximately R160 million budget cut, amounting to a 12,2% in-year budget cut to our conditional grant. When asking National Treasury this morning, "Does this mean that we have to stop building schools?" their answer was, "Yes. Please do not build new schools." That was the answer on record this morning in the Budget Committee.

This is going to be a direct violation of Section 28(2) of the Constitution dealing with the rights of children, as well as Section 29 in terms of the right of education, sub-section (1) in terms of the impact it is going to have on the Western Cape, and with this in mind, given that education is an immediately realisable right, hon Minister, I would like to find out in terms of the application process how the late and extremely late applications are going to affect the particular application process, but also with the amount of people that are moving to the Western Cape and the fact that the money is not following the feet, what is the impact of this national [Interjections.] looming budget cut going to be on the application process? I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Baartman. I recognise hon member Cassiem.

Ms A CASSIEM: Hon Speaker, the current school placement system in this province and whether the MEC choose to accept this or not, is not only dysfunctional, but it is also very much still racist and classist.

Hon Speaker, the manner in which the school placement system is applied in this province is similar to the apartheid school placement system, where African and Coloured learners were not welcome in certain schools reserved for Whites only and the slight difference now is only that the quota system these schools use today allow for a smaller number of Black learners to enrol in these former Model C schools.

Hon Speaker, the fourth and fifth Quintile schools use a quota system to the effect of having a set number of learners which the school wishes to take from each racial group. However, in most cases the system favours White learners and much to the detriment and discrimination of Black learners who are mostly rejected by these schools, and only for this Department to later provide them with placement in remote Quintile one and two schools.

Hon Speaker, the reason why the majority of Black learners' applications are rejected in these Quintile four and five schools is because there is this perception and this assumption entrenched in racism and classism, hon Speaker, that African and Coloured learners and their parents will not be able to afford school fees in these types of schools, and then the best way is to rather profile them by race and rejection of the application, hon Speaker.

It does not make sense for parents to apply for their child to several schools unsuccessfully, only to be referred to the nearest district which will in turn place a learner not only far from their home, hon Speaker, but also in a

totally different Quantile.

With that being said, hon Speaker, when it comes to the learners who lodge appeals with the Office of the Provincial Education, hon MEC, after their placement applications have been rejected, what is the turnaround time in which they will be furnished with the outcome of their appeal? In other words how long does it take for them to get to know the outcome? Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Cassiem. I recognise hon member Sayed for your second contribution.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Until now the MEC has still not told us formally how many learners are unplaced. Now this lack of transparency regarding the number of learners not placed in our schools is deeply worrying. The MEC has deployed various tactics to avoid a simple question of how many learners are yet to be placed in schools, and he is protected by the Chairperson of our Committee, hon member Baartman. Instead she goes on and talks about division of revenue ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...and all of those things. She is

actually the Deputy MEC and not the Chairperson of the Committee
...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...to hold the DA accountable. They
want to impress their leaders and not drive accountability.

We want to know how many learners have been placed [Interjections.] in
schools built as part ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...of the Schools Rapid Build
Programme.

I wish to draw the attention of the MEC to a desperate plea for help from a
parent of an unplaced learner, Mr Lionel Williams. In fact it has been sent to
the office of the HOD, who wrote to the ANC expressing his concerns. He
stated and I am not going to quote the entire letter, but he says:

"I am writing to you today to bring to your attention a matter of
great concern regarding the enrolment process at Rhenish Primary
School in Stellenbosch."

Mr Williams is Black. This school is White dominated. It has come to our attention that there is significant unfairness in the manner in which enrolment decisions are made. Greatly disadvantaging local residents within the established radius of the school, and I am not going to go further.

Mr Williams's story mirrors that of many other parents whose children are still unplaced in schools despite applying in a timely and correct manner. The MEC is cognisant of these challenges, but has taken a decision not to put measures in place to address them.

To the DA, it seems that unless an issue negatively affects a particular privileged constituency, it is not deemed urgent and will not be addressed. For example, apartheid Israel's genocide on Gaza has not been condemned by a single leader of the DA. In fact your members ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...get cautioned if they speak about it.

The parents of unplaced learners, we encourage you to persist in the fight to ensure that your children have places in schools. We will stand with you side-by-side.

In closing, hon Speaker, we welcome the passing of the Basic Education Law Amendment Bill as a significant step towards dismantling discriminatory

practices within school governing bodies. The passing at national level.

The SPEAKER: Order. Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Western Cape is not an island. Yes, it must still go through the NCOP ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...but at the national level. The legislation will curb the misuse of admissions and language policies that have systematically excluded Black learners ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Sayed, your time has expired.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...from certain schools.

The SPEAKER: Please conclude.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable education system. Yes, indeed here in this Legislature ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Sayed.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...you must report [Inaudible.]
...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Please take your seat.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...that you get...

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Sayed. Your time has expired. Hon Minister, before you continue can I please remind the guests in the gallery, you must please not partake in the Sitting, but you are more than welcome in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament.

Hon Minister, you may continue. Hon member Dugmore, is that a point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Sorry, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, could I just address you? Just in regard to your reminder to the members of the gallery.

I just want to ask you, do you have any level of understanding perhaps if someone is deeply impressed by the speech that has been made or has mentioned the issue of Palestine and then the reaction is a voluntary one and it is difficult for them to stop applauding? Do you have any sympathy for that spontaneous response?

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, that is not a point of order. That is not a point of order, but once again, hon members in the gallery or hon guests in the gallery, you are indeed very welcome in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, but please, you may not take part in the proceedings of the House.

Hon Minister, over to you.

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Thank you, hon Speaker. It is very hard to imagine that any members of the public gallery would be deeply impressed with the performance of the hon Leader of the Opposition.

Hon Speaker, we, as I have said in my opening remarks, are working hard to place learners. As the hon member knows, the aim of the Rapid School Build Programme is to build more schools in poor communities in our province and we are mobilising resources to expand access to education at an unprecedented rate, as I have said, adding an additional 600 classrooms this year, despite the devastating budget cuts.

Just last week, as the hon member knows, I was at a junior high school, a brick and mortar school, which is being built in the heart of Belhar, serving poor communities in our province.

The hon member is absolutely right. We have received over 22 000 late applications and of course we expect many more late applications. What

makes the late applications challenging is that we do not know where learners will be seeking placement, what their grades are, languages, ages and subject choices, and that, I hope hon members would accept, makes planning and resource allocation quite challenging.

Despite what the hon member claims, we have been transparent and we have provided continuous updates during the admissions cycle and we, I am pleased to say, are making good progress. As of 22 November 2023 we have allocated 119 110, or get this. 98,7% of the learners for whom applications were received for Grade 1 and Grade 8 for the 2024 school year. Placements in progress for 1 568, or just 1,3% of our Grade 1 and 8 learners are in progress, and of those 1 568, 636 of those placements are late applications which were received after the submission window closed, and some arriving in fact last week, but as I said in my earlier remarks, we do understand that this is a stressful period for our parents.

That is why we are exploring all available options to find places for our learners in our province. Our officials are working hard under extreme pressure to make sure that we find places for every child and we will leave no stone unturned in our effort to place every learner here in the Western Cape. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. Hon members, that concludes Interpellation 2.

We now move on to Questions for Oral Reply in terms of Rule 202. I wish to remind hon members that once the hon Premier or the Minister has started to reply to the oral question as printed on the Question Paper, hon members must use the chat facility for the Sitting of the House, if you are on the online system, or indicate by show of hands, that you would like to ask a follow-up question.

There are four opportunities for follow-up questions, but the hon member who has posed the initial oral question as printed on the question paper, will have the first opportunity for a follow-up. Thereafter hon members may use the remaining opportunities to ask the follow-up question. The first question or reply will be the hon Premier.

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY

1. Ms P Z Lekker to ask Mr A R Winde, Premier:

What mechanisms are being put in place in the Provincial Government to ensure that there is no abuse of power by senior officials, especially in instances of inappropriate relationships with subordinates?

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker, and thank you very much to the member for the question.

The Western Cape Government adheres to the same legal guidelines

governing reporting of unethical behaviour, corruption and non-compliance as the broader Public Service, including the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 1996, which emphasises professional ethics for Public Service employees. This obligation extends to the Code of Conduct in Chapter 2 of the PSR 2016 and that requires reporting of unethical conduct, non-compliance and corruption. To uphold the code of conduct and in line with the Western Cape Government values, whilst fostering ethical and integral workplace culture for optimal organisational performance.

The Western Cape Government opted for the Ethics and Integrity Management Strategy. This strategy applies across the Western Cape Government departments influencing policies, strategies, plans and practices for an ethical workforce. Aligned with national statutory provisions, the Western Cape Harassment Policy, updated again in 2023, ensures awareness of harassment definitions, responsibilities for prevention and management and procedure for addressing allegations, the policy firmly condemns all forms of harassment, abuse of power and protecting employees from any form of discrimination, fostering a safe work environment and empowering compliant lodging without fear of retaliation.

The Western Cape Government employees, subjected to a workforce harassment while performing officials' duties, have the right to report such acts in terms of the mechanisms provided in the policy triggering Western Cape Government's investigations and appropriate action. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Premier. I recognise the hon member Sayer.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Thank you very much ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members – just, hon member Sayed, my apologies. Just before you pose your question. I have allowed hon member Sayed in terms of Rule 196(5) in the absence of the hon member Lekker. Hon member Sayed is duly authorised to ask the follow-up question. Hon member Sayed.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Thank you very much for your indulgence, hon Speaker, and let me thank the Premier for his response and for citing some of the Regulations.

What I wanted to know from the Premier is did the Director-General of the Western Cape Government have a relationship with a member of staff in the Provincial Government? And if so, what did the Premier do about it? If not, I am not asking hon Dr Meyer, can he please keep quiet.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Sayed, please take your seat.

Hon member Meyer, please take your – Minister Meyer. Order, hon members! Hon member Sayed, I am not going to allow that question to be posed to the Premier. It is completely out of order and, I mean the – hon members. Hon members, you cannot put a question to the Premier or any

other Minister with things that are not even substantial.

It has got nothing to do with the – [Interjections.] hon members! Hon members! Hon members, ask a follow-up question on the response that was just received. You are asking the Premier for an opinion and you are asking the Premier to give his view on something and that is completely out of line. It is not in terms of the Rules. I am not going to allow that.

Hon member Sayed, if you – I have ruled on the matter. If you have an [Interjections.] if you have an objection to my ruling you can follow the parliamentary process to ask [Interjections.] – you can challenge my ruling and use the parliamentary mechanisms to do so.

Hon Premier, I am not going to allow you to answer that question. Hon member Sayed, you can, I will give you an opportunity to pose the second part of the question that you wanted to pose, but [Interjections.] – hon members, if you have an objection to my ruling, please follow the parliamentary processes to challenge that ruling. [Interjections.]

I have ruled on the matter. Hon member Sayed, would you like to use that opportunity? Hon member Dugmore?

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I would like to address you on your ruling.

I think it is only fair that members of this House can be informed in terms of what Rule you have actually made this ruling, because if we are, as we surely will, follow the process in regard to your ruling, you surely need to cite us what Rule, because I would argue, hon Speaker, that you are fundamentally undermining the democratic rights of members of this Legislature.

We all know that you refused my request to ask a question to the Premier about the issue of Palestine, you refused, [Interjections.] and now you are simply protecting the Premier. Here is a question that is being asked to the Premier. The accounting officer reports to him. Surely there must be a basis for you to make this ruling.

So my question is in terms of what Rule are you prohibiting hon member Sayed from asking a question which is directly related to the question proposed by hon member Lekker, which talks about ensuring that there is no abuse of power by senior officials, especially in instances of inappropriate relationships with subordinates. That is surely a legitimate question and that is a follow-up.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Dugmore, I am not going to entertain. I have ruled. You are more than welcome to follow the parliamentary processes.

Hon Chief Whip, is that ...[intervenes]

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Thank you. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon Chief Whip.

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Speaker, thank you very much. I am covered by the sense that you have said you have ruled in this regard. This is an august House, this is not Luthuli House. [Interjections.]

Hon Speaker, I wish to emphasise in terms of Rule 196(3)(d), hon Speaker, [Interjections.] that a member is not allowed to be asked to express a view. Thank you, hon Speaker. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon members. [Interjections.] Hon members! Hon Chief Whip, I have ruled on the matter.

Hon member Sayed, would you like an opportunity?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): You see, hon Speaker, hon Speaker, let me address you.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): You are patently unfair.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): You are covering, you are covering up for the Executive, but if you had to give me an opportunity to complete the question you would not even have ruled it out of order, because if I had to complete the entire question ...[intervenes]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! [Interjections.] Hon member Sayed, you do not need to shout at me.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): If I had to complete – I have to because what you are doing is wrong and I am glad that you are exposed. [Interjections.] The DA is exposed ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...in front of the public for covering up for this Executive. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Yes, and say something that is out of order. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Hon – there is a member on the floor. I will recognise ...

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): And you did not allow me to complete my question.

The SPEAKER: Hon Chief Whip and hon member Kama. Please take your seats. Hon member Sayed, you are still on the floor.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Allow me to complete the question. If so, what did the Premier do about it? If not, has any information to this effect come to his attention? Simple. Yes or no? [Interjections.] That was ...[incomplete]

The SPEAKER: Hon Sayed – hon members! I have ruled on the matter. Hon Premier, you will not – hon members. [Interjections.] Hon members, are you – hon Chief Whip, is that a new point of order? Because I am not going to entertain any further points of order.

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Speaker, may I address you? [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: You may.

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Speaker, I ask that the House ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: [Inaudible.]... all speak.

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): ... be suspended for half an hour.

The SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

An HON MEMBER: [Inaudible.]... speak if you allow her.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Kama?

†An HON MEMBER: Thula ke wena. [Keep quiet]

Mr M KAMA: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I stood up [Interjections.] earlier even before the Chief Whip. I stood up earlier even before the Chief Whip because I realised that you were disrupted when hon member Sayed was making the question.

Hon member Sayed was making the question and he was disrupted by the Minister of Agriculture and before he could even conclude you then make a

ruling.

Surely, hon Speaker, when you ask about some sort of an alleged misconduct or anything like that, which seemingly happens now and again in this Government, and you ask whether this has been brought to your attention, as the Leader of Government this has been brought to your attention? If not, if it was, what have you done about it? If not, what are you going to do about it? That is a legitimate question.

Mr M KAMA (ANC): If not, if it was: what have you done about it? If not: what are you going to do about it? That is a legitimate question. And hon Speaker, to then just say, 'No, I have ruled.' You are asking the hon Premier to make an opinion. That is not what the hon members are asking from the hon Premier. They are not asking for an opinion, but asking whether this was brought to the attention of the hon Premier and whether it...and the hon Premier could simply respond 'yes' or 'no' ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

Mr M KAMA (ANC): And the precedent in this House is that the one who used to shout a lot here, hon Fritz. There was an issue about hon Fritz, and we had to ask if this was brought to the attention of the hon Premier and the hon Premier had to respond. And that question was never deemed to be a question that seeks for an opinion. We do not want opinions; we are holding the Government accountable and that is the responsibility of this House. And

as the hon Speaker of this House, you have a responsibility to ensure that this House performs its duty of holding this Government accountable.

And really, that is not fair, hon Speaker, hence what hon member Dugmore was saying. You at least owe us an explained ruling than to just dismiss us when we are holding the Government to account in this instance, because we feel that you are dismissing us, without even telling us what the Rule is, what content in that statement is seeking for an opinion of the hon Premier, rather than asking a direct question if this issue was brought to his attention.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Kama. I have ruled on the matter. So, I take note of your comment. I recognise the hon Fry. Hon Fry, you may continue.

Mr C FRY (DA): Thank you, hon Speaker. I thank the hon Premier for his response ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Fry, please take your seat. Hon Sayed, is that a new point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Speaker, it must be placed on record that the manner in which you are chairing this session and dealing with this question in particular, you are shielding the hon Premier, you are shielding the Executive. It must just be noted. And I am glad that we have got people in the gallery. I am glad that the media are here, and the Democratic Alliance

is exposed. You are protecting.

We are not saying that something happened or did not happen ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): We just want clarity. But thank you very much. That's fine.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Sayed, that is not a point of order. Hon Fry, please continue.

Mr C FRY (DA): Thank you. Thank you, hon Speaker. I wish to thank the hon Premier for his response. While difficult to get it right, it is vitally important that we do everything possible to ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Fry, please take your seat. Hon Bans, what is your point of order?

Ms A P BANS (ANC): Yes, hon Speaker. I think hon Sayed, when he raised his hand, he had a question. I am not sure now when you are moving to the next question without an answer or giving him a second opportunity. Are you dismissing him or what are you saying?

The SPEAKER: No. Honourable ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: The hon Chief Whip there has no comments ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

An HON MEMBER: ...we are in Questions now.

The SPEAKER: Hon Bans, I have allowed the hon Chief Whip or the hon Deputy Chief Whip of the Opposition to pose a question. He continued in the point of order. I have ruled; I have recognised hon Fry. There are two more opportunities. Whether the hon Sayed wants to pose another question, he may do so. Hon Fry, you may continue.

Mr C FRY (DA): Thank you, hon Speaker. It is vitally important that we do everything possible to insulate our workplaces from abuse of power, especially as it relates to gender. With that in mind, what is the hon Premier's Government doing to promote gender equality in the workplace? Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Fry. Hon Premier.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker and ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker and I want to first say that my initial reaction to when someone stands up in this House and talks about an official in this Government in this House, straight out of the blue. No, nothing on paper or whatever, and says is this individual in a relationship with another individual?

I must say that I think ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order, hon members! Hon Sayed, I am going to give you another opportunity after this. [Interjections.] Hon members, there was a question posed by the hon Fry. The hon Premier is responding. I cannot dictate how the hon Premier responds. Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: I must say that I think that is totally unacceptable, but I will speak to the issue that the hon member has raised because I know of a case ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, that is not the question that the hon Fry raised.

The PREMIER: Listen, I am going to speak to the ...[Audio distorted.] point.

The SPEAKER: That question, I have ruled on. So, if the hon Sayed will have another opportunity to pose a question, but can you please answer the

question posed by hon Fry. [Interjections.] Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: So, I am actually a little bit caught unawares here because the hon Fry's question, I did not hear correctly because I was trying to get the real information for this. I am not sure if the hon Fry can just quickly pose that question again.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, in the interest of moving forward, I am going to ask hon Fry if you want to re-pose your question?

Mr C FRY (DA): Thank you, hon Speaker. My question was: what is the hon Premier's Government doing to promote gender equality in the workplace?

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Fry. Hon Premier.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker and thank you to the hon Fry. I think first of all, ...[Interjections.] I think first of all, I am sure this House knows, but of course, we have got citizens watching, that we have first of all, on a Minister – hon Minister Fernandez – whose total focus and responsibility is to deal with GBV issues, first of all within our Government, but then of course, whole heartedly across our province. We know that Gender-Based Violence in South Africa is a massive scourge that is, I mean, the detail and the numbers are just horrendous.

This Government has run a couple of projects specifically in the workplace.

We have gone through processes where we have put posters up. We hold things called 'Courageous Conversations' that are led by hon Minister Fernandez, where we enable people to come up, speak about these issues so that they can be dealt with decisively; like laying criminal charges, like going through investigations, like you heard in this House, a lot of noise about an hon Minister in this House where it was very easy to deal with.

I got the allegations, I confronted him, I suspended him, I put an investigator in place. The investigator concluded the investigation. I fired him based on his reply to the questions asked, not on the document because that document as we have had over and over again, protects the individuals. In this country, we need to protect the whistleblowers and we need to protect those abused women.

And I will stand and fight forever to protect those women because that is the problem in our country, we do not protect the women who are abused, and I will continue to do so. And they have never brought a Court application to try and get that information out because they know no Court will give them that open ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members, order!

The PREMIER: It was dealt with by a Senior Advocate at the Cape Bar ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: And I am actually still distressed that no charges have been laid by those individuals ...[Interjections.] because this should see its way all the way to a Court finding. That is what should happen in that specific case.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Premier. Hon Sayed.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Speaker, seemingly, the hon Premier wanted to respond to the question, but you prevented the hon Premier from responding to the question. So, let me ask, but not exactly in the same way. In the context, we still have Farrel Payne who is still appearing in Court on GBV charges from the Department of Transport. Within that context I am asking, has any information to the effect of what we have raised about the DG, come the hon Premier's attention? What? If any information has come, what has the hon Premier done about it? That is all we want to know. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, there are two questions in that you heard. There is one follow-up allowed. I am not going to dictate how you respond to that, but please, please just be mindful that when you are mentioning names of members, of individuals that are not members in this House that can defend themselves. Hon members, please just be mindful when you pose those questions and hon Premier, please do so when you respond.

The PREMIER: So, first of all on the question that was raised around an official that works in this Government. You know that if it's the Director General or an HOD, then that is my responsibility. If it is another official within a department, it is the responsibility of the accounting officer or the HOD then to follow through.

In the case of the official that he has mentioned, of course, it has been said and you could hear in the banter that the case is in Court on the one side and also, being dealt with through CCMA actions. And of course, that HOD applied her mind, in this case, and of course, those answers have come to this House and that process must follow. Because of course, I believe in the rule of law, I believe in our Constitution, and we have to allow these legal processes to follow their course.

And I know that I am not obliged to, but in the case that has been raised by the hon member, I presume – now, I must presume because of course, he has not given me really any detail. He has just raised massive suspicion around the Director General in this province and I have said to you that I have found that quite unacceptable in a parliament. I do not think that is the way that it should be done when someone's integrity is questioned.

But, hon Speaker, through you, if this is the case and I do not know if it is, but if it is the case ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The PREMIER: A while ago, I did receive, somebody sent a message to me ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon member!

The PREMIER: ...suggesting what the hon member suggested. We tried to trace this person to get detail because I said please, I need detail on this. I will deal with it if this is correct. I need detail. I even lodged it with the police, and we traced it to a burner phone and there was no further detail, if this is the same case. But I also took that detail, and I did raise it with the Director General who denied it. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon members, are there any further follow-up questions? Hon Sayed.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Speaker, let me say: from the hon Premier's response, clearly it was nothing out of order. We do not do these things to besmirch peoples' characters. There is a platform through which we are able ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): This is the platform through which ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): This is the platform through which ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Sayed, please ask your follow-up ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...we are able to raise issues.

The SPEAKER: Ask your follow-up question.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Yes. Yes, I am pre-empting the question. This is where we can raise issues. There is nothing about shocking. We are protected by parliamentary privilege here and we have not said anyone is guilty of anything ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Or ask your ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): They must not choose what is shocking with his selective morality.

The SPEAKER: What is your ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): As he has selective morality

...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: ...follow-up question?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...on the issue of Palestine and Ukraine as well.

The SPEAKER: Hon Sayed!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): My question is ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Sayed! ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): My question is ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Chief Whip, please take your seat.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Can I ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Sayed ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Can I give you my question, hon Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Hon Sayed, can I please address you? Hon Sayed, we are

busy with Oral Questions. You are allowed a follow-up question. You made an entire statement and then you want/expect me to allow you to then pose your follow-up question. Please, please do not abuse the parliamentary rules and privileges. Hon Sayed, please ask your question.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Did the hon Premier request for a case number? Were there any other further follow-ups that he made after that message? Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon Premier.

The PREMIER: I think I did answer that question. We tried to contact this person. It was a very vague message. We even gave it to the Police to trace the message back from the Police: it is a burner phoner and not traceable.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon members, that concludes Question 1 on the Question Paper for Oral Reply. We now move on to Question 2. Hon Premier, I recognise you.

Escalation in violent crimes

2. Ms A P Bans asked Mr A R Winde, Premier:

In respect of his pronouncement in his 2023 State of the Province Address that “By making communities safer we can create an

environment where people can realise their potential and flourish, free from fear of becoming another victim of crime”:

- (1) What is the Provincial Government’s response to the escalation in violent crimes, including the mass murders in Gugulethu, Mfuleni and surrounds, and in attacks on international tourists in townships such as Nyanga;
- (2) whether there are plans to increase the resources to fight crime?

The PREMIER: Thank you very much and thank you very much to the hon member for the question. The Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety informs me that:

1. The Provincial Government has identified areas that are high priority, due to the volume of murders that occur in these areas and Gugulethu, Mfuleni, and Nyanga fall within this category. As such, they have been and currently are LEAP deployments to these areas on a daily basis and the table below: Nyanga, 84 deployments, in Gugulethu, 64 deployments and Mfuleni, 91 deployments.

Having reviewed data at the times that the crimes take place, the LEAP officers have implemented two shifts of 12 hours each so that the area has presence 24 hours per day. LEAP officials are briefed daily and are aware of the crime patterns as they materialise. Therefore, the Provincial Government

has responded to these needs as envisaged in the Safety Plan using visible policing as a vehicle to achieve safety outcomes.

LEAP continues to work together with the South African Police Services and Metro, and City Law Enforcement, to prevent and address crime as and when it arises. Residents are urged to call the City's hotline number and report all criminal activities to assist LEAP and other law enforcement officers to respond to matters that might be occurring.

2. The Province has allocated LEAP resources in response to an analysis of murder hotspots. The Province continues to engage with SAPS to increase its human resource allocation to the Province with the highest murder rates and will continue to monitor those allocations.

Now, of course, when in the last few months, we saw an increase in specifically some of these hotspots, it was horrendous. I mean sometimes, we would see up to 120 murders in one week. And of course, still, the responsibility as we have been saying so often in this House, resides with the South African Police Services.

When I was elected to this House nearly five years ago and we said we are going to put a Safety Plan in place because this province was the murder capital of South Africa; more people were murdered in this province per 100 000 than any other province in our country. And that is why we put extra money towards the Safety Plan. We only have an oversight role according to

the Constitution, but we said we have to change things. We cannot deal with the murder rate that we have.

And of course, look at the latest statistics, not just in these three areas as raised in this question by the hon member. Look at murder in South Africa: 27 000 people in this country. In actual fact last year, it was 27 272 human beings in this province were murdered. The worst statistics in the last 20 years. Quite frankly, Bheki Cele should fall on his sword. He should resign. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Immediately.

The PREMIER: He should! Quite frankly, he should be fired because he has not resigned. 27 000 murders! ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The PREMIER: But what I can say, hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, you will have an opportunity to ask follow-up questions.

The PREMIER: What I can say, hon Speaker, is that the interesting fact is ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Hon Premier, please take your seat. Please take your seat. [Interjections.] Hon members [Interjections.] Hon Bakubaku-Vos, if you want to pose a follow-up question to the hon Premier you may do so. There is an opportunity. But for now, the hon Premier is responding. Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: So, it is absolutely disturbing, the crime statistics and now, the worst in 20 years. It has just been released. But with the small amount of money, the just over R1-billion that we put aside initially and said let us try something else. Let us not keep doing the same thing over and over again, not deploying officers to this province. It is the National ANC-run police that still do not put the police officers in their numbers to these police stations, ...[Interjections.] to these hotspots. They still have more people in the other areas.

Now, hon Speaker, unfortunately, we are not allowed to use ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. There is a point of order. Hon Bakubaku-Vos?

Ms N BAKUBAKU-VOS (ANC): Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: That is a point of order?

Ms N BAKUBAKU-VOS (ANC): Yes, it is. I want to ask you where is the

Safety Plan ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Ms N BAKUBAKU-VOS (ANC): Do not point fingers. Where is your Safety Plan ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable, honourable ...[Interjection.]

Ms N BAKUBAKU-VOS (ANC): ...and your ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Bakubaku-Vos! [Interjections.] Hon members! [Interjections.] Hon Bakubaku-Vos. [Interjections.] Hon Bakubaku-Vos, that was not a point of order. That was a question. [Interjections.] Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much. The hon member asked for a Safety Plan. I am going to send one to her. It is an ongoing working document and of course, in this House ...[Interjections.] in this House, I have mentioned how the Institute for Security Studies which I have picked up internationally overseas, has a hotspot policing for murder and robbery in Cape Town, a case study that is studied through universities internationally. That is the Safety Plan. That is the Safety Plan.

Then, of course, how to map violence without police data. That, again, is the

Safety Plan on our health data is used for mapping policing. But hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members!

The PREMIER: But hon Speaker, the Safety Plan: we used to be the murder capital of South Africa five years ago and then, we put the Safety Plan in place. We are no longer the murder capital of South Africa; it is now the Eastern Cape. And we are no longer just number two, we are number three. KZN is also more than us. We are now number three. We were number one, we have gone to number three. It is still not good enough. And the Institute for Security Studies ...[Interjections.] the Institute for Security Studies put out this report, ...[Interjections.] hon Speaker, put out this report last week and this report speaks when did murder increase in the four provinces.

How, this is not us. This is the Institute for Security Studies, independent, doing an analysis of murders in the Western Cape. [Interjections.] They asked the question and then, they do not like the answer. So, the Institute for Security Studies says change in the per capita murder rate ...[Interjections.] in the four provinces with the highest murder rates over two consecutive periods. [Interjections.]

The first period is the bar graph on the left and the second period, is the bar graph on the right. On the left, the Eastern Cape. This is 2011/2012 to 2017/2018, is the first bar graph and 2017/2018 to 2022/2023 is the second

period. And they have measured the two periods. In other words, before the Safety Plan and after the Safety Plan, hon Speaker. And in each of those provinces, the Eastern Cape, it goes up. The murders per capita go up.

In Gauteng, they drastically go up if you look at that graph. They have more than trebled. In KwaZulu-Natal, they doubled and in the Western Cape, hon Speaker ...[Interjections.] if these people cannot hear me, I will shout louder. I have got no problem with that.

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. Hon Bakubaku-Vos, this will be the last time that I am cautioning you. I will name members the next time. [Interjections.] That is not intimidation, this is a promise because this running commentary, you are degrading this House, you are affecting the decorum of the House, and this cannot continue like this. [Interjections.] Hon Premier, my apologies. You may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you, hon Speaker. So, people must be able to ask questions and then they must be able to be given the answers. And so, in the Western Cape, if you look at the bar graph, it has gone down to negative one. It is by far the biggest change in murder rate in South Africa as a result of the Safety Plan. And this is only one ...[Interjections.] Hon Speaker, this is the deployment of 1 300 officers ...[Interjections.] 1 300 officers to hotspots as opposed to the 20 000 officers that the South African Police Services deploy in the Western Cape. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Is it not 16 000?

The PREMIER: There should be ...[Interjections.] Is it 16 000? There should be 25 000 according to the numbers, but they do not deploy because they do not care what happens to the citizens and the most vulnerable in our province.

So, when you look at the Safety Plan statistics and obviously, the hon member asked questions, which are horrendous. When we saw those numbers, hon Minister Allen gave me those numbers. Week after week, another 120 murders, another 130 murders. It is horrendous! But when you look at not only the increases, but you have also got to look at the influence of the decreases in the hotspots.

So, in Atlantis, there was a decrease of 77,8%. In Bishop Lavis, there was a decrease in murders of 21,7%. In Harare, 30,5%; in Khayelitsha, 26,5%; in Kraaifontein, 25,9%; in Philippi, 20,8%; in Mfuleni, 9,6% and in Samora Machel, 7,1%. So obviously, I am totally distressed over 84 murders in Nyanga, the 64 murders in Gugulethu, the 91 murders in Mfuleni, the 4 000 murders in this province. 4 000, hon Speaker!

The hon Minister Bheki Cele should have gone a long time ago. 27 000 murders in this country in a year. It is unacceptable! It cannot be justified, and we need to have devolution of policing power to this Province. We will be able to show what we have shown with a small amount of investment and

independent reporting. We will show you that we can make a big difference in safety of our citizens. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Premier. Hon members, the four opportunities ...[Interjections.] Hon members, I am not going to allow any further follow-up questions. I am going to suspend the Sitting for 30 minutes. The House is suspended.

The House is suspended at 16:12.

The House resumes at 16:40.

The SPEAKER: You may be seated. Thank you very much, hon members, for your indulgence. We will now deal with the four follow-up questions to that question that the hon Premier responded to on Question 2, it will be hon Bans, hon Kama, hon Fry and hon Bakubaku-Vos. Hon Bans.

Ms A P BANS (ANC): Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, from the hon Premier's response, the hon Premier was speaking of millions that have been spent within the budget of Community Safety to ensure that crime is fought. However, hon Speaker, in the same breath the hon Premier is speaking about the National Government that has got to be blamed for that.

The question I want to ask the hon Premier: after all this money has been spent, the millions of monies that I am speaking about here, I made a

recommendation last time to the hon Premier saying that how about looking into the plan of the former Mayor because it is clear that money cannot always solve problems. We can even blame any Minister that is there. There are other strategies, but clearly, it fell onto deaf ears.

Now, can the hon Premier tell us where the Safety Plan failed and why the province is regressing on safety because as we are standing here at this present moment in time, the Western Cape is again number one when it comes to crime stats. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Bans. Hon Premier, there was more than one follow-up question, but I am not going to dictate how you respond.

The PREMIER: So, I have actually answered all of those questions and she is absolutely incorrect. We have now gone to number three on the murder hotspots where we were number one. I have mentioned the decreased percentages across the board where it has come down. This is the only province in South Africa where it has come down.

And sure, I am absolutely frustrated and angry by the three months in this last quarter where we saw an explosion of murders in a number of these hotspot areas; where the one week there were 120 citizens who got murdered. But of course, and you know, you get these ups and downs, but what is the overall trend year on year? I have given the detail. I have just and I do not

know, I mean, she has asked the question again.

At the moment, the Eastern Cape is number one, not the Western Cape. I am giving you the answer. The Eastern Cape is ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The PREMIER: The Eastern Cape is number one ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. Hon Sayed, is that a point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Sorry, can the hon Premier speak directly to you and then in turn, that will also create some sense of calm. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon Premier, please speak to the Chair and please ...[Interjection.]

The PREMIER: Thank you, hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The PREMIER: Thank you, hon Speaker, I will speak to the Chair. The hon members asked the questions about the Safety Plan and the efficacy thereof, which I have given a detailed answer to that. I first of all said that five years

ago, when we started with the Safety Plan – I do not know if she wants a copy as well – when we started with the Safety Plan, we were the number one murder hotspot in South Africa. We are now number three. We have moved from number one to number three.

But what happened is we had a plateauing and a slight decrease in certain areas over time, but what has happened nationally, is the crime rates have just kept on going up across the country. And that is why when Bheki Cele gives the crime stats, they are the worst in 20 years. That is why he should be fired because they just keep on getting worse. 27 000 people murdered. I have told the House that. It is unacceptable.

So, in the Eastern Cape it is now 22,5 murders per 100 000 citizens. In the KZN Province, it is 15,6. In the Western Cape, coming to the province and I know they are supposed to keep calm, but in coming to the Western Province, it is now 16,5. We are no longer the murder capital because of those interventions. Because in that time, we have also seen a consistent undermining of the police men and women, the numbers, and support that they get in this province from the National run ANC Police Minister. He keeps on giving less and less and less officers to the police precincts or the crime hotspots in the province.

Still, I cannot tell you how often and the hon Kama will know because he has been in those meetings as well, where we said, ‘Hon Minister, look at the police to population ratio in Claremont. Now, take some of those police

officers and send them to Gugulethu or Nyanga or wherever the murder hotspots are.’ They do nothing about it: nothing, zero! That is why he should be fired.

And so, we put our small amount of money as opposed to the R200-billion at a national level, we put our small amount of money, use some data ...[Interjections.] use some data and evidence, hon Speaker, through you in answering that question, and of course, the independent reports come back and show something has happened. There has been a change. So, that investment, that money, has started to make a difference in citizens’ lives in this province.

And the really interesting thing, hon Speaker, is of course, this data does not lie. There is the data. The interesting thing is to see what the Premier in Gauteng is doing. And when we go to the national lekgotla and the Premier from Gauteng says the same as what I say, ‘I am sick and tired of the criminals with all the infrastructure, all the data, all the support and we get no support from the Police Minister.’ That was not me. That was the Premier from Gauteng, and he says, ‘What I am going to do is I am going to also put law enforcement officers on the ground.’

The only thing is that the Premier in Gauteng did not follow our regulatory model because of course, I believe in constitutionalism, the rule of law, regulation, and legislation. So, we did a partnership at a city level because that is where you can put law enforcement officers in place, according to the

regulation and the law. That is where you can actually employ people. You cannot do them in a province. So, what he did in Gauteng was the opposite in the model, but he also put some money towards it and employed extra people. I heard Premier Lesufi the other day in a meeting where he was also speaking about the National Minister, and he said:

“Minister Bheki Cele, your days are numbered.”

That is word for word. That is what he said in that meeting. Because [Interjections.] because he is really angry now. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, the hon Premier is on the floor. [Interjections.] Hon members, we have suspended the House for 30 minutes. I got the agreement from both parties that we will continue to get through the order and the business of the day. Hon members, I am again, for the last time, appealing to you because I do not want to suspend the House or adjourn the House. There are things on the Order Paper. We cannot degenerate the House in the manner that we are doing. We are elected representatives. Hon Premier.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. So, what happened in Gauteng is they did not use all of our regulation. You can ask hon Minister Allen how often other provinces come to visit him and the Department to say, ‘so tell us what you are ...[Audio distorted.] doing’ ...[Audio distorted.] with these reports at the national lekgotlas or the PCCs or that level, they all want

to know in the other provinces because they feel exactly the same as we do. They feel desperate because they are not getting the right decision making from a centralised controlled SAPS system out of Tshwane. They also want, like we have, more powers to deal with policing.

But the mistake that they made in Gauteng is they appointed them themselves, I suppose, using an EPWP type model and now, the Minister will not approve their peace officer status and their firearms. So, that was why the Premier in Gauteng was saying that the Minister's days are numbered. But of course, we would suggest that he follows the same process that we followed. We had a lot of interrogation through legal people and legal support in making these determinations.

And that is where, hon member, the money is being used and the evidence is there. The data is there. We have shown that it works and that is why other provinces that are run by your political party, come along here to come and have a look at what we are doing. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Premier. Hon Kama.

Mr M KAMA (ANC): Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, you know, I think in the response of the hon Premier, he was raising some concerns around the weaknesses of SAPS, but unfortunately, as the Committee, we are not able to even exercise our oversight over that. I think the last time we visited a police station was in January. So, we do not know

what is happening in the stations ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Kama, can I remind you you have a follow-up question to pose.

Mr M KAMA (ANC): Yes, thank you. Thank you for reminding me, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I think as the hon Premier was saying, I think about nearly five years back he had this Safety Plan and the Safety Plan talked about halving the murder rate in the Western Cape, after carefully analysing the crime situation in the Western Cape, not in other provinces. And then, invested the billions into the Safety Plan.

Now, I want to check because the hon Premier in this House assured us that at some point, if the Safety Plan does not respond to what is the target, there will be some impact assessment that is then conducted. Now, understanding that we are nearly at halfway through that period, which was meant for this Safety Plan, I want to check what are the plans of Government because the recent statistics show that Delft is number one in terms of the murder ...[Interjections.] in terms of ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order. Order, hon members. Order, hon members! Hon Sayed, is that a point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): I would like to know what is going on there? Clearly, a member of the public is being harassed and something is

being confiscated from the member of the public. We would like to know what is it and what is the issue. We agreed on both sides of the House that we will have calm, but this is unacceptable, and this is going to descend us into chaos. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. [Interjections.] Order, hon members! [Interjections.] Order, hon members! [Interjections.] Order, hon members! [Interjections.] Hon members! Hon Mvimbi.

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): Whilst I await your ruling, can I please request us as members of the House, not be party to harassing members of the public who are coming to dignify our occasion that we are sitting. Let us please ...[Interjections.] not be part of harassing because what we witnessed there was an unnecessary harassment of members of the public. And members of the public cannot be harassed under our watch. So, while waiting for your ruling ...[Interjections.] while waiting for your ruling on this matter, can I please request that let us not be part of harassing members of the public while they are sitting there. They are our guests. They are our guests. [Interjections.] In Africa ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you ...[Interjection.]

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): ...that is not how we treat guests.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Mvimbi. Hon Meyer, before I recognise you,

...[Interjections.] I recognise the Deputy Chief Whip.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Chairperson ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, there is an hon member on the floor. Hon Deputy Chief Whip.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I rise on Rule 59(1). When hon member Mvimbi rose, he indicated that hon members of this House are harassing people. I am looking at the hon members of the Democratic Alliance in this House. I am not seeing people ...[Interjections.] I am not seeing hon members of this House of the Democratic Alliance ...[Interjections.] busy harassing people ...[Interjections.] In terms of Rule 59(1), ...[Interjections.] I believe the hon member is imputing improper motive amongst the hon members of the Democratic Alliance ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Thank you very much. I recognise the hon Minister Meyer. I will recognise you thereafter and thereafter, after hon Minister Meyer, there is a point of order by hon Dugmore. [Interjections.] Order, hon members! There is an hon member on the floor.

Hon Minister Meyer.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, I am just consulting. Something that I think we hold very dear in this House. The core values of this Legislature is respect ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: It is transparency, it is honesty in this House, it is ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: ...impartiality, it is the values that we have committed to, it is efficiency, and it is ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: ...accountability. And we are welcoming public participation and guests from the public. But the Rules of this House dictate that members who are in the gallery may not directly and indirectly get involved in the activities of this House. It is clear to me, hon Speaker, can I speak? [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. There is a member on the floor.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I rose on a point of order. Can I be protected?

The SPEAKER: You are protected, hon Minister, continue.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Thank you ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Now, there is a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Continue, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: And I therefore think, hon Speaker, can I ask you to make a ruling in terms of participation of members of the public in the debate, in terms of Rules of this House because it is clear to me that the Rules of this House are not being respected by certain members in the gallery. And therefore ...[Interjections.] Can I be protected? I am busy with a point ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, I will. You can continue. I will address the matter when you have done.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I will therefore ask that we respect A,

the Rules of this House in respect of both sides, but also on the sides of members in the gallery. And this behaviour must be addressed by you as the Presiding Officer of this particular House. [Interjections.] Can I then ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members! There is an hon member on the floor!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I would like to proceed. If I am allowed to proceed ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please continue.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Can I continue? [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, please, there is an hon member on the floor.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: The hon member Bans does not want me to continue. [Interjections.] Ja, it is a country by the way.

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, can you please continue.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Yes. Hon Speaker, in very simple, basic terms. Can you make a ruling in terms of the conduct of members in the gallery, in terms of their behaviour and in terms of the Rules in this House.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the hon Dugmore, then hon Mvimbi and then, hon Bakubaku-Vos.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. I am also addressing you on this point of order. I think it is important that as a Speaker who is in charge of this House, you get a report before this House rises today, as to what was the conduct of the staff members of this Legislature and any other member because there is a serious allegation now that an item of property of one of our guests has been removed.

The second thing I want to raise is that when hon members of this House want to defend other hon members, they for instance forget that a staff member of this Legislature who was wearing a scarf similar to one that I am wearing, was basically belittled by an hon member of this House for wearing simply a scarf. So, this conduct and this anti; this fascism and this anti-Palestinian does not only extend to others. There is an hon member of this House from the DA who actually belittled a staff member and questioned why the person was wearing a scarf like this. That actually is a reflection of the bias of the pro-apartheid Israel stance that the DA has deeply embedded in their DNA. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Mvimbi.

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Of course, I am

rising in terms of Rule 66 of the point of order, but also would like to direct you to Rule 6 of the Rules of Order which is on conduct of members of the public. And it reads:

“Members of the public attending a plenary Sitting or a committee meeting may not create or take part in any disturbance of the proceedings of the House or Committee and must obey the direction of the Presiding Officer.”

To this end, hon Speaker, there is no member of the public who has actually, according to me, transgressed Rule 6 of the Rules of Order. What we have actually said in terms of ...[Interjections.] let me also just clarify myself in terms of the accusation that has been made about me accusing the members. ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): I have seen the honourable ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable [Interjections.] hon Mvimbi, you cannot clarify. You rose on a point of order.

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): Yes.

The SPEAKER: And your point of order is noted. You do not

...[Interjection.]

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): I need to point, I need to correct ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: You do not need to ...[Interjection.]

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): ...correct it.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): I have misrepresented. As a result, that means representation is still going to be there ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): ...until ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

Mr L L MVIMBI (ANC): ...rectified ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable, hon Mvimbi, that is not a point of order. Hon members, it is clear to me that there is no intention from the hon members of this House, to continue with this session. I mean, you are clearly demonstrating that you have no desire to continue and for that reason, I will

now adjourn this Sitting of the House. The House is therefore adjourned, and all questions and written replies will be printed in Hansard. The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 17:04.