



**Budget Vote Speech Presentation**

**By**

**The Speaker of the Free State Legislature,**

**Hon. N.B. Sifuba**

**2022/2023**

**12 April 2022**

**Bloemfontein, Fourth Raadsaal**

Deputy Speaker, Hon Lucy Mapena

Premier, Hon Sefora Ntombela

Hon Members of the Executive Council,

The Chief Whip, Hon Thabo Meeko

Deputy Chief Whip, Hon Sarah Moleleki

Chairperson of Chairpersons of Committees, Hon Jabulani Radebe

Hon Members of the Legislature and NCOP Delegates,

Distinguished Guests,

Members of the Fourth Estate

Dumelang! Sanibonani! Good Day! Goeie Dag!

***We are better together!***

Deputy Speaker, it is a great honour to present before this house, the Budget Vote for the Free State Legislature.

At the beginning of the 2021/2022 financial year, we made a commitment to ourselves and to the people, to never lower the guard. We focused our energies in continuous implementation of key policy directives and programmes. This we did not do because we had a choice or that the prevailing conditions allowed us, but because our actions and words are vital in uniting our people. Our unity was fortified in April 1994, when South Africans from all walks of life, proved to the world that indeed ***we are better together.***

Together, we must use the historic April month to celebrate our humanity. Our resilience as people is marked tacitly in red across this month of April.

The month of April echoes in our minds a reminder that the freedom we celebrate is a result of great human sacrifice.

The cowardly assassination of Chris Hani was undertaken during this month. Apartheid government killed Solomon Mahlangu by hanging during this month. When twenty million voters took to the voting polls, April once again, symbolised a great triumph for our country; a democratic election which resulted in freedom and the demise of a coercive rule, as well as constitutional democracy where all South African have a voice.

As we celebrate this year's freedom month, we celebrate South Africa as a fully independent State that respects human rights and the sovereignty of other nations. As the legislature we also celebrate that with freedom and independence, our country enjoys full membership as part of the commonwealth countries. As members to the Commonwealth, we work together with 53 other independent States to quicken Africa's development and to safeguard continental peace and stability. It is in this regard that we join the rest of the world to commemorate the 28<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the genocide against the Tutsi ethnic minority in Rwanda. The 1994 genocide claimed almost one million lives. May the world never see these kinds of atrocities inflicted upon the people.

At the national level, the Free State Legislature continues to cooperate and participate within the South African Legislative Sector through established forums such as the Speakers' Forum and the Secretaries' Association of South Africa.

Deputy Speaker, we are also meeting here following some very important events in our government calendar. The successful hosting of the State of the Nation Address by Parliament of South Africa despite the destruction by fire at the National Assembly, is commendable. The hosting of the State of the Province Address by Free State Legislature with almost 2000 people in attendance, was good for the province. The successful work in tabling the Provincial Budget and a marathon of Departmental Budget Votes remains critical for our democracy.

Over the past two years, the impact of Covid-19 pushed us all into increased reliance on technology and new methods of work. The demands of our people likewise increased and the resources at our disposal continued to dwindle. We maintained our resilience. Although, as a country we have learnt many lessons.

Among them is that ***we must stick together***. We learnt that the country's success in education, especially in science and technology can be directly linked to its

independence against global pressure. In his book called *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Plague in History*, John Barry (2004), writes “...*the influenza pandemic that erupted in 1918 was the first great collision between nature and modern science.*” The painful lessons of the Corona Virus pandemic are instructive to us as a country; that unless we prioritise education and especially modern science and technology, other countries will impose their solutions upon us. As we have seen, they dictated the type of vaccines, the price and the pace of its distribution. The Covid-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for South Africa and Africa to find solutions to scientific problems rather than to look across the oceans.

It is for this reason that we celebrate every milestone with so much vigour, such as the matric result produced by the class of 2021. For we believe that these results are a symbol of resilience and conviction, that one day we will become global leaders in scientific solutions. It is for this reason that we say once again, congratulations to the class of 2021, the Premier, MEC for education and all our educators.

Honourable Members, as we continued to confine our operations within the restrictions of Covid-19 regulations, we know that it was not easy, but we succeeded. Yes, it is true that more and more families have sunk deeper into poverty due to worsening economic situation and of Covid-19 pandemic. Yes, it is true that we are emerging from a horrible period of uncertainty. It is important therefore, that we keep the same spirit, we maintain the same momentum of the fight against the disease to triumph over the triple challenges tormenting our country.

Dear Honourable Members, let me take this moment to send warm regards to the family of !Goab Johannes Doenkie Kraalshoek, who was a leader of the Griqua People. I have had the pleasure of meeting and engaging with him during the Speakers outreach programmes. Although the recognition of the Khoisan community is a matter under consideration, his role in building consciousness among the Khoisan community in the province and country is immeasurable. May His Soul Rest in Peace!

Ladies and gentlemen, while reminiscing of a grief-stricken life of Rubin Hare, who was a former Deputy President of South African Students Organisation (SASO) in the 70s, the author of a book called Meditations in the Gutter, Molaodi Wa Sekake, asks some pertinent questions. He asks:

“If the revolution we talk about does not start from the heart, where does it start? What of our revolutionary claims, if they don’t talk to compassion, humanity and mutual trust?”

These are the questions we should be answering in our everyday work. Having previously appreciated the economic challenges facing our people, our work is also endlessly developing. There is no doubt that the Legislature must position itself in such a way that its work can directly and visibly influence the living conditions of our people.

Times have changed, there isn’t enough resources. However, like a dung beetle, we always deliver more with less. For every work we execute successfully and at the rate at which we have been doing, more communities are looking up to us with great expectation. The nature of our work, the obligation to always observe the Constitution and budget constraints, do at times impose about restraint. However, if things are done accurately and sincerely, we can gain the love and trust of our people. We can achieve our set objectives in building the national democratic society.

## **Programme 1: Institutional Leadership**

### **Strategic Focus**

Looking at the impact of our work in line with our strategic focus, we appreciate that a clearly defined plan is a cornerstone of our success. We held number of strategic reviews on our plans to enable the institution to meet the needs of a fast-changing world of work. This work is encapsulated in four main programmes as identified in the strategic plan of the institution.

We cited strong strategic and financial management as critical to the functioning of the Legislature. As noted by Professor Christopher Achua, “*senior leaders must make every*

*effort to eliminate policies, procedures and behaviours that undermine the change efforts.*” We expanded our management structure and increased the involvement of our middle management in senior management processes. More and more organisational policies were developed, and outdated ones are being reviewed.

We conducted an organisational structure review and drastically reduced the vacancy rate by filling thirteen (13) vacant positions with internal and external candidates. Further six (6) funded vacant positions will be filled during 2022/2023 financial period. They include (i) Hansard Editor (ii) Deputy Secretary (iii) Admin Hansard (iv) Procurement Officer (v) Senior Assets Officer and, (vi) Constituency Liaison Officer. We have also earmarked seven (7) vacant and unfunded posts to be filled this financial year. They include (i) Chief Audit Executive (ii) Researcher (iii) Marketing Officer (iv) Performance Information Officer and (vi) Archives.

Of importance, the crucial position of the Secretary to the Legislature was filled during the third quarter of 2021/2022 financial year. Congratulations to Mr Mapiitja Machaka, for his appointment as the Secretary to the Legislature. The appointment is important for maintaining stability within the institution and to ensure strategic focus.

Honourable Members, it is with great pleasure that we once again wish to report a very good story. The Free State Legislature has received Unqualified Audit outcome for the financial year of 2020/2021, for the third time in a row, and for the fifth time in six years. Only during 2017/2018 financial period did the Legislature receive Qualified Audit outcome. We have already developed a clear post-audit action plan to address matters raised by the Auditor General. We already know that we will have to urgently improve on our performance information as well as our financial statements.

### **Labour Matters**

Deputy Speaker, despite some internal and external factors which are naturally influencing our work environment, the institution has proven to be flexible and competitive. We conducted an assessment on the current recognition of years of service versus the performance-based system. Workshops, benchmarking and engagements at shop floor level have been completed to give way to the implementation of a performance-based system. We are of the view that once the process is finalised for

implementation, the reward system will be directly linked to the strategic objectives and goals of the Legislature.

### **Public Procurement to Support Local Communities**

The Free State Legislature remains committed to the principles of public procurement that requires that procurement processes of goods and services are (i) competitive, (ii) Fair, (iii) transparent (iv) equitable and (v) cost effective. We note that the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Regulations of 2017 has recently been declare invalid by the court. However, our procurement processes will continue to advance businesses of the previously disadvantaged groups such as blacks, women and people with disability. We will also continue to encourage and support suppliers in rural areas of our Province. This approach remains consistent with the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act of 2009.

Our oversight mechanism such as public hearings, committee site visits and sectoral activities taking place across the province enhance Legislature's procurement activities. As a result, we can support many Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises and stimulate local economy.

### ***Constitutional Mandate***

The Constitution of the Republic provides that the State should consist of three arms, namely, (i) Parliament, (ii) the Executive and (iii) the Judiciary. Each with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This originates from the Magna Carta, also known as the Great Charter of the 13th century which came as a result of the revolt by people who were against the absolute power possessed by the King at that time. It emphasised the liberties of the people and the rule of law and as a result, gave birth to the establishment of Parliament and independence of the Judiciary. The reason we have the separation of powers is to ensure democracy and not to have power and authority concentrated in a single institution. Parliament makes laws, the Executive executes the laws, and the Judiciary interprets the law.

The Constitution states that the legislative authority of the province is vested in its provincial legislature. We therefore have the responsibility in terms of section 114 to

maintain oversight of the exercise of provincial executive authority in the province. Our core functions are law making, public participation and maintaining oversight of the Executive and other organs of State.

The Constitution makes it very clear that the Legislature must conduct its business in a transparent manner. For us to be able to discharge all these duties, we need funding from the State fiscus which rests with Department of Treasury. This funding process is explained in the Financial Management for Parliament and Legislatures Act of 2009, as amended in 2014 (FMPPLA) as well as the Public Finance Management Act no. 29 of 1999.

## **Programme 2: Core Business**

### **Legislative Sector Matters**

Deputy Speaker, through necessary and deferential consultations and engagements, more focus was given to the powers and functions of the Legislature. The Legislative Sector Bill remains a key instrument initiated by the Sector for which we played a critical role as a province.

Despite the slow process in finalising and adopting the Bill, some of its key principles are seriously considered. This with the aid of a Memorandum of Understanding of which we are a signatory. For example, (1) the power of legislatures in determining their own budget processes and (2) the promotion of separation of powers between the Legislature and the executive arm of the State.

We are also continuing with the Budget Cycle Model that regulates the consideration of government plans for the purpose of effective oversight and accountability. The Budget Cycle Model enhance the ability of the House to adopt reports as required by legislation. We acknowledge that matters of employment relations and basic conditions of employment in the Sector have not been fully integrated and implemented at Central Bargaining Forum. However, discussions are under way within the legislative sector to harmonise different conditions of employment in each legislature. This is to create a platform towards common approach to employment relations in the sector.



## Legislation and Oversight

The use of the five (5) Cluster Portfolio Committee mechanism, each having corresponding departments as reconfigured by the Executive has yielded good results. Each Cluster, except for the Public Accounts and Finance Committee, exercised oversight over 3 departments. We held 101 Committee Meetings, 17 House Sittings, 6 Voting Mandates conferred on Section 76 Bills, 4 petitions reports tabled and 9 under consideration. This is an exceptional work done by Honourable members.

The Public Accounts and Finance Committee has also done wonderful work in considering the reports of the Auditor-General [and] in relation to departments, public entities and municipalities. The Committee has also done wonderful work in consideration of the Money Bills tabled by the Member of the Executive Council for Finance. The Committee also considered reports by the Provincial Treasury from the Auditor-General as well as the consideration of the quarterly financial and non-financial reports of all departments.

## Law-Making and Harmonisation of Internal Arrangements

- a) In the previous financial year, the Legislature considered a number of proposed provincial legislation and adopted the legislation for implementation by the provincial executive and municipalities. Bills emanating from the NCOP were also considered and conferral of mandates to the NCOP through provincial delegates. As we continue to carry out our mandate of law-making, we encourage our Portfolio Committees to use lived experiences of our people to initiate pieces of legislation. In this way, we will be able to assess the impact of legislation and the acceleration of fundamental change in our society. Hon Members, we can do this, because ***we are better together***.
- b) The review of the Rules and Orders of the Legislature will be given urgent attention during this financial year. The Speaker is empowered in terms of Rule 1, to frame rules to respond to conditions such as those occasioned by Covid-19. We however do caution against over-reliance on this rule. In the meantime, we will continue to follow the sector approach to attain uniformity.

## c) Relations with stakeholders

In 2020 the Free State Legislature signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the Public Protector. The MoU outlined and clarified the role of parties in relation to each other. A clear programme will soon be outlined to ensure stronger collaboration with other Chapter 9 Institutions within the province.

### **Public Participation and Education**

Deputy Speaker, this year we could not continue with our programme of ***Taking The Legislature To The People*** by hosting Departmental Budget Votes in various Districts due to limited funding. The situation has a negative effect on public participation in terms of meeting the expectation of the public.

James Madison wrote as far back in 1822, that ***"knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.*** We must ensure that people understand that without their involvement, no law can be fully accepted and respected by all. Our work is to provide knowledge to our people through public participation as a mechanism. Of these mechanisms, sectoral activities are very central to our public participation and education programme. The Office of the Speaker managed to execute the following activities across the districts:

- a) Youth Parliament, held in *Bloemfontein*.
- b) Widow's Dialogue, held in *Kroonstad*.
- c) Women's Dialogue, held in *Welkom*.
- d) Traditional Leadership Dialogue, held at the *Basotho Cultural Village*; and
- e) Disability Parliament held in *Bloemfontein*.

We intent to hold these sectoral parliaments annually as a way of interacting with different sectors in our communities. The resolutions and outcomes of these sectoral activities are shared with the provincial government through the Office of the Premier for further processing. We extend our sincere appreciation to honourable members and support staff who participated and worked so hard for the success of these activities. We have done ***better things together.***

Our focus during the 2022/2023 financial year will include the review of the Petitions Act to give it some extended powers to address non-responsiveness of stakeholders. We will also improve our systems, processes and capacity to speed up the turnaround time and to schedule more meetings for the Ad-Hoc Committee in order to address the current backlog.

### **Maintenance of the Fourth Raadsaal**

Deputy Speaker, we acknowledge the allocation of the R2,5 million rand by the Provincial Treasury towards maintenance at the Fourth Raadsaal. We consider this to be a step in the right direction. The restoration of the Fourth Raadsaal is not only necessary for accommodation but for its heritage and tourism attraction ability. It is for this reason that more resources will be required in due course for continuous maintenance.

The process regarding the modernisation of the Fourth Raadsaal remains in progress. We were compelled to halt the process in order to give attention to matters arising out of the tender process. While we are not pleased about these delays, it is always necessary to consistently scrutinise and monitor implementation and compliance with existing regulations.

### **Programme 3 – International Relations**

Deputy Speaker, this programme has not yet been incorporated in the Appropriation Bill. Therefore, its activities will continue to be funded under programme 1 in line with the provincial allocation.

We wish to report under international work, that the Draft Constitution of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) was considered by the Committee on Rules and Orders in preparation for the launch of the CPA Branch. The CPA Constitution provides among other issues: clarity on the roles, rights, and responsibilities of current Members to the Legislature, Members of the Executive and the Associate Members, for their participation at all levels. These levels include the Commonwealth Women Parliament (CWP). We consider a launch for a CPA Branch to be long overdue,

and therefore, the finalization of the Draft CPA Constitution was critical in taking matters forward.

#### **Programme 4: Members and Political Parties Support**

We continue to provide administrative and financial support to Hon Members and political parties as required by section 116(2) of the Constitution. The support is provided for under budget Programme 2 called Facilities for Members and Political Parties. This has also been aided by the introduction of the national Act on funding of political parties. The Act came into operation at the beginning of the 2021/2022 financial year. In terms of this Act, members receive wide range of support including the performance of political work within their political party structures. Members are always encouraged to use the support given by the Legislature to support and work with and among their respective constituencies. In this way we can establish *mutual trust*, we can show *compassion* and *humanity*.

#### **Appropriation: Budget Tabling**

Honourable Members, the Budget for Vote 2 to be appropriated amounts to **two hundred and seventy million, one hundred and twenty thousand rands** (R270.120 million) with a further statutory amount of **twenty-four million, five hundred and thirty-three thousand rands** (R24.533 million). Therefore, the total budget allocation amounts to **two hundred and ninety-four million, six hundred and fifty three thousand rands** (R294.653 million). This constitutes a 1,8% (one point eight percent) decrease compared with the previous financial year's allocation.

Whilst I am presenting the structure of the Legislature's Budget Vote, based on 3 Programmes and the allocated funding of such programmes, I wish to remind the House of the revised budget structure, comprising of 4 programmes to ensure a more standardized structure amongst all Legislatures and Parliament. With the support of Treasury, the additional programme of International Relations in the Sector will be reflected in Vote 2 of the Legislature.

The allocated funding per programme is as follows:

- Programme 1 - Administration: We have allocated an amount of **one hundred and sixty five million, nine hundred and fifteen thousand rands** (R165.915 million). The budget includes (1) Office of the Speaker (including the budget allocations to Portfolio Committees), (2) Office of the Secretary to the Legislature, (3) Office of the Deputy Secretary to the Legislature, and (4) Finance Division.
- Programme 2 – Facilities and Benefits for Members and Political Parties: We have allocated an amount of **sixty million, two hundred and seventy-one thousand rands** (R60.271 million).

In terms of Section 116 (2) of the Constitution, financial and administrative assistance to each party represented in the legislature is offered in proportion to their representation, to enable a party and their leaders to perform their functions in the legislature effectively. I am pleased to announce to the House that financial assistance toward parties, within the provisions of Section 116 (2) have increased substantially during the financial period of the 2021-22 financial year. In order to sustain these increases, more funding will be requested during the adjustment appropriation scheduled later this year. These funds will be directed toward constituency, research and offices of represented political parties. Political parties are expected to be more responsive by giving the necessary audience to their constituencies and submit constituency reports in terms of Rule 36 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislature.

Constituency reports must be debated in the House, and it is through these debates that Members of the Executive Council are held accountable individually and collectively. Therefore, in order to give effect to constituency work by Members, constituency reports must be submitted for tabling in the House. We will take this matter forward regarding the process governing the tabling of Constituency reports as it requires our immediate attention without any further delays.

Programme 3 - Parliamentary Services: We have allocated **forty-three million, nine hundred and thirty-four thousand rands** (R43,934 million). The purpose of this

programme is to ensure that the core procedural function such as Hansard, Legislation and Oversight and Legal Services are catered for.

Direct Charge: Members Remuneration is budgeted at **twenty-four million, five hundred and thirty-three thousand rands (R24.533 million)**. This allocation is aligned with the recommendations by the Commission on Remuneration of Public Office Bearers.

In executing this budget, we want to impress on the constitutional mandates vested with the Legislature and the fact that we require a well-balanced budget to carry out the mandates of oversight, public participation and law-making. Consensus was reached amongst the Speaker, the Premier and Treasury, that additional funding for the Legislature will be required during the Adjustment process. Among other things, is that the budget for broadcasting services needs to be redirected to the Legislature. This will enhance compliance with section 118 of the Constitution in ensuring that a regulated public access of the public and media is practiced in all our sittings.

### **In conclusion**

Honourable Members, in his musical eulogy called Biko, Peter Gabriel (1980), exalted a forte of human spirit using the death of Bantu Stephen Biko. The singer writes:

**“You can blow out a candle, but you cannot blow out a fire. Once the flames begin to catch, the wind will blow it higher, and the eyes of the world are watching.**

If we have learnt anything from history, we now know that our divisions have only managed to tear us apart. Let us appreciate that we are better together, not apart and not as individuals. Like Biko’s spirit, our unity must **blow higher like fire** and scald all petty politics. One of the key aspects of our work is that we need to rid ourselves from the spirit of self, whether from individual or political party point of view.

Our analytical approach in serving the people and to solving the triple challenges must be guided by a sense of maturity. With so much technology today, no stage is too small. **The eyes of the world are watching.** We cannot always converge here to deal with concrete analysis of material conditions by just being purely partisan. Our people are

not impressed by listening to us when all we do is to reject and affirm only by following a party line. Our people can see and hear that we are merely playing politics, instead of working to better their lives. We need to start immediately to work ***better together***.

Let me thank all Presiding Officers and Members of the Legislatures for their hard work. We thank our staff and management under the leadership of the Secretary for their sterling work and their support to members of the Legislature. I also want to thank my family and friends for their continued support. Thank you to Chapter 9 institutions and all our stakeholders. Thank you all for collaborating well with us in the past year.

In 2022/2023 financial year, we must be better than the previous years.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I hereby table the 2022/2023 financial year Budget Vote of the Free State Legislature.

**I thank you.**

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