

DEBATE OF THE BUDGET VOTE
R872, 057 million
OFFICE OF THE PREMIER
DELIVERED BY MPL MPUME ZULU
18 April 2023
KZN PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Honourable Members

I rise to commend the Premier for presenting a very clear Policy Statement with achievable targets.

In particular, as the African National Congress, we understand the importance of this Budget Vote in the history of this province.

This is the first Budget Vote after the coronation of ISILO Samabandla – Misuzulu kaZwelithini.

At this stage, I therefore wish to pause and pay tribute to the King of the Zulu nation.

Bayede !!!!

The people of this province will be happy to know that their government, which they elected democratically, recognizes the important role played by the King in this province.

As the ANC we welcome the R79, 565 million that has been allocated to support all programmes championed through the Sub-Programme on Royal Household.

We must work together to preserve our culture and heritage.

As we move forward, His Majesty remains our source of inspiration. We believe that with his support, this province will continue to edge towards a brighter and prosperous future.

In this Budget Vote, the Premier has demonstrated that the ANC as a governing party has heeded a call by His Majesty that we must work hard to create an equal society where values identified in the country's constitution are enjoyed by all.

Through this Budget, His Majesty will be available to lead us to drive rural and township development for the benefit of his people.

ISILO has on several occasions expressed concerns about food insecurity. We remain confident that, with this Budget Vote, the Premier will ensure the rollout of Operation Sukuma Sakhe and District Development Model.

These initiatives are designed to ensure an integrated approach involving all spheres of government towards the delivery of services throughout the corners of this province.

Honourable Members, despite budget cuts, a proper budget allocation process has ensured adequate allocation of resources to strengthen the implementation of programmes.

This Policy Statement is presented during the Freedom Month, for it was in April that through the ballot, we ended apartheid and ushered-in a new era of hope of a better life for all.

The manner in which the Premier presented the Policy Statement, she affirmed the commitment of the ANC led government to accelerate socio-economic transformation in this province.

As presented by the Premier - the hallmark of the programme of action of the ANC government is to ensure that the principle of freedom, human rights and democracy is universal, shared and belongs to all our people irrespective of status in society.

This was reflected in the State of the Province Address, which outlined concrete plans to grow the economy of the province for the benefits of ordinary members of society.

Critically, the Premier has demonstrated that the Budget Vote is not merely about statistical and numerical figures expressed in Rands. It is primarily about government leadership – a strong will and commitment to advance the course of human rights and dignity for all people.

Today, the Premier demonstrated that the Budget Vote is about commitment to ensure that state resources are deployed to uplift the downtrodden while stimulating inclusive economic growth, employment and development within the provision of prudent use of available resources.

As the ANC, we welcome the R212, 7 million allocated for Administration.

This will enable OTP to play a much more assertive and visible role in providing leadership and coordinating key and priority government programmes. Such programmes will drive government departments towards the achievement of our Provincial Vision.

With this Budget, the Office of the Premier will be in a position to monitor and evaluate, on a regular basis, all provincial government departments - public entities and municipalities in relation to ensuring efficient service delivery.

It is encouraging that the Premier and OTP have their fingers on the pulse of this province. This demonstrates the commitment of the ANC government to intervene where necessary to prevent the collapse of services needed by the people.

The R111, 7 million allocated for the Financial Management Sub-Programme will assist to ensure sound financial management in the whole province.

The Premier has demonstrated her understanding the importance of ensuring equitable resource allocations for government departments and all municipalities.

The Institutional Development Programme, Policy Research and Co-ordination will assist OTP to do robust public policy research.

In addition, resources allocated towards strategic human resources development will contribute to the realization of government policy priorities by ensuring that government interventions in the economy are targeted.

The Premier has demonstrated the ANC-government's commitment to accelerate access to economic opportunities. Moving forward, the OTP will ensure that interventions are efficient, sustainable, and empower our people.

Honourable members, we welcome the allocation of resources to strengthen forensic investigations and integrity management activities.

In line with the ANC resolutions on fighting fraud and corruption, we want members of the public to be able to notify government and law enforcement agencies if they know suspicious conduct of officials involved in the Supply Chain Management.

This forms part of our efforts aimed at combating unethical conduct in our SCM and government in general.

Through the integrity management unit activities, OTP will ensure that all categories of staff understand that it is indeed an honour to be assigned to the positions of trust over the resources of the state.

As the ANC we are encouraged by the Premier's focus on a variety of mechanisms to promote integrity and to combat corruption.

The mechanism involves the Code of Conduct for staff, financial disclosure framework for senior managers and officials in finance and Supply Chain Management components.

This is what the Premier has articulated in the Policy Statement. In addition, we welcome the fact that, the Provincial Treasury, under the leadership of MEC Peggy Nkonyeni has teamed up with OTP to ensure good governance across all government departments and municipalities.

The Finance MEC will elaborate more in her Budget Vote.

We welcome a clear focus on building the capacity of young people to lead youth entrepreneurship revolution. We have no doubt that the potential of young people will be unleashed through the R100 million allocated to the KZN Youth Empowerment Fund.

The Premier has responded very well to the ANC's call that ordinary members of society must be protected from rising fuel prices and food prices.

With the allocated budget, OTP will ensure the co-ordination of the implementation of the Poverty Eradication Programmes across all government departments.

Honourable Members, COVID-19 and devastating floods that ravaged different parts of the province created more poverty, with children being the most affected.

The allocation of R218, 859 million is a demonstration of her commitment to speed up the interventions.

I wish to turn my focus to the National School Nutrition Programme.

As the ANC we welcome the fact that the Premier is actively involved in the implementation of the Food and Nutrition Security Plan.

This is co-ordinated through OTP as it was articulated by the Premier in the Policy Statement.

The ANC government remains committed to ensure that this programme is sustained for the benefits of learners across all corners of the province.

After all, this programme was designed to cushion vulnerable members of society – children from the negative impact of food insecurity. We understand that over the past few days, the department experienced hiccups in relation to the delivery of food to certain schools.

We welcome the oversight role exercised by the Portfolio Committee on Education in terms of ensuring that hiccups that have been experienced are addressed by the department.

Equally, we note the ongoing support provided by Provincial Treasury as directed by both the Premier and MEC Peggy Nkonyeni.

We wish to assure learners, COSAS, educators, organized labour, school governing bodies and stakeholders in the education sector that the School Nutrition Programme is receiving the urgent attention of the deployees of the ANC in the Executive Council. We are confident of a long lasting solution.

In conclusion, we affirm our commitment as members of this house to continue to play an oversight role over the executive.

We appreciate solid leadership provided by the Premier as the first citizen of the province, deployed to oversee the administration of the state resources.

As the ANC we support this progressive budget vote.

I thank you