

# in session



## 7<sup>th</sup> Parliament First Sitzings





## New members of the National Assembly Sworn in by Chief Justice

***In a marathon sitting lasting all day, the first session of the 7th Parliament saw the swearing-in of 348 Members of the National Assembly (NA) and culminated in the election of a Speaker and Deputy Speaker, writes Rajaa Azzakani.***

The proceedings kicked off with Chief Justice Raymond Zondo presiding over the sitting, indicating that the swearing-in of 400 members of the 7th Parliament presents South Africa with an opportunity to reflect on the past 30 years of democracy. Judge Zondo highlighted the importance of this milestone because, “as South Africans, we get an opportunity to look back at the road we have travelled and see where we have made mistakes and see where we have done well, and to make sure that,

in the fourth decade of our democracy, we will not repeat the mistakes that we made in the past 30 years”.

Explaining the process, the Chief Justice said the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) was deemed part of the parliamentary precinct and the purpose of the meeting was for the Chief Justice to swear in all members of the National Assembly, preside over the election of the Speaker and the President, while the Speaker will preside over the election of the Deputy Speaker.

Judge Zondo also reminded MPs of the magnitude of the moment and oath they were taking. “The swearing-in of the members of the National Assembly is important because, in Section 48 of the Constitution, members of the National Assembly must swear or affirm their faithfulness and obedience to the Constitution before they begin to perform their functions.

“I take this opportunity to say that I consider it an honour to chair this important meeting because of where we are as

a country, having finished 30 years of our constitutional democracy and starting another 30 years.”

He also reminded MPs that they make laws for our country and, in that way, shape the future of our democracy. “Therefore, as you take the oath or make the affirmation that you will make today, do recall the huge responsibility that the people of South Africa have placed on your shoulders and the honour

and privilege that you have been given to be part of this very important body in our country.”

Mr Ramaphosa and Mr Paul Mashatile were among the first to be sworn in during the ceremony. The groups of 10 MPs had to read out the oath or affirmation for MPs, prescribed by Schedule 2 of the Constitution, as follows: “I [name of member] swear/solemnly affirm that I will be faithful to the Republic of

South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a member of the National Assembly to the best of my ability.” In the case of an oath, they had to add: “So help me God.”

Following the swearing-in process, the sitting moved to the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. 🇿🇦

*“I take this opportunity to say that I consider it an honour to chair this important meeting because of where we are as a country, having finished 30 years of our constitutional democracy and starting another 30 years.”*



# National Assembly elects Thoko Didiza as Speaker & Annelie Lotriet as Deputy Speaker

*The sounds of the liberation struggle song Malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi reverberated through the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) during the first sitting of the 7th Parliament after the African National Congress's (ANC) Ms Thoko Didiza was elected and took up her seat as the new National Assembly (NA) Speaker. Rajaa Azzakani reports on the event*

The song pays homage to the role women played during the liberation struggle. Ms Didiza was nominated for the position alongside Ms Veronica Mente from the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Before the nomination, the EFF's Mr Floyd Shivambu requested a break in proceedings to consolidate their position on the process.

Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, who presided over proceedings, called for nominations once the sitting resumed and explained that the process does not allow for debates. He added that voting would be via a secret ballot.

The voting proceeded smoothly, after which the Chief Justice explained that the counting would be conducted according to the rules of the NA. The returning officer and the assistant returning officers counted the votes in his presence in a separate room. Members of the EFF challenged the secret counting of votes, characterising it as undemocratic not to allow observers. They said the counting should be done as it used to be done in the plenary in full view of all the members to ensure transparency.

Chief Justice Zondo informed the members that the secret counting is part of the new rules of the NA. The Chief Whip of the Democratic Alliance, Ms Siviwe Gwarube, called for the process to adhere to the rules. She said the rules for the sitting had been circulated to all MPs and the EFF should have asked for amendments at the correct time. She argued that NA rules emanate from the Constitution, so it would be

improper to amend the rules from the floor of the House.

The new Chief Whip of the ANC, Mr Mdumiseni Ntuli, then suggested that the whips of political parties should observe the counting. Because there were no party whips, the Chief Justice proposed that there should be party representatives. This proposal was accepted by members as a way forward. Parties were given an opportunity to name their representatives for the counting.

Chief Justice Zondo announced that 341 ballots were counted and nine were spoilt votes. Ms Didiza received 284 votes and Ms Mente 49. Ms Didiza was duly elected as the new Speaker of the NA. In accepting her election, she thanked all MPs for voting for her and assured everyone of her dedication to the task.

Ms Didiza further said, "We have an opportunity to express our views and represent our constituencies, but it does not mean that those who might have voted differently do not support the institution. This is an important institution in our country and the work we do in passing those laws plays an oversight role. We need to do so in the interest of our people."

Ms Didiza said MPs must ensure they do their work as legislators in the interest of the people. She said she is committed to fulfil the role of Speaker with fairness and work with all parties to ensure that

the work of Parliament reflects the will of the people. "I also commit that I will work with all the parties to make sure that we conduct the business of this Parliament in a manner that indeed reflects the will of the people of South Africa. Thank you very much for this honour," Ms Didiza said.

She then presided over the election of the Deputy Speaker. Proceedings kicked off with a nomination from Mr Shivambu, who nominated ATM leader Mr Vuyo Zungula. The DA's Ms Siviwe Gwarube nominated Dr Annelie Lotriet.

The process then mirrored the process of electing the Speaker. Dr Lotriet was elected Deputy Speaker, winning an overwhelming majority of 273 votes in a secret ballot. It was announced that 339 ballot papers were issued, and 12 ballots were invalid, Dr Lotriet obtained 273 votes and Mr Zungulu got 54.

Addressing the House afterwards, Dr Lotriet assured the Speaker of her support and wished her strength, courage and wisdom during this time. "This is a great responsibility and I do not take it lightly. I understand the trust that has been placed in me. I will be fair and just. I will do all in my power to be just. I undertake to do everything I can so that we work in the interest of the people of this country. We will strive to make the 7th Parliament the best-ever Parliament," she said in her acceptance speech. 🇿🇦



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OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

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Ms Thoko Didiza, Speaker of the National Assembly



Dr Annelie Lotriet, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

# New Presiding Officers in National Assembly

*The new Presiding Officers of the National Assembly both have a long established footprint in politics. Insession took a closer look.*

## Ms Thoko Didiza

The National Assembly's (NA) new Speaker, Ms Thoko Didiza, is an experienced politician and administrator in the South African government and in Parliament. She first came to Parliament in the cohort of African National Congress MPs voted into power in South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 and was appointed as Deputy Minister of Agriculture from 1994 until 1999.

In the 5th Parliament, Ms Didiza served as National Assembly House Chairperson for Internal Arrangements and as Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee to Amend Section 25 of the Constitution. Later, in the sixth administration, she

was appointed as the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development from 2019 until 2024. She was also Minister of Land Affairs and Agriculture from 2004 until 2006 and then deployed to the Department of Public Works as Minister, serving in this position until 2008.

Before becoming a Member of Parliament, Ms Didiza worked in various capacities, including as the secretary-general of the Women's National Coalition, which produced the Women's Charter for Effective Equality that was tabled in the 1st Parliament. Ms Didiza holds an Honours degree in Politics.

The Speaker is the political head of the National Assembly and is responsible for presiding over House sittings and its internal committees (such as the Rules and Programming committees). The Speaker must also exercise executive authority, provide strategic direction, and ensure the House effectively discharges its constitutional functions.

## Dr Annelie Lotriet

New Deputy Speaker Dr Lotriet joined Parliament in 2009 and served as the Democratic Alliance's (DA) Shadow Ministers of Arts and Culture, of Higher Education and Training, and of Science and Technology. She also served as the DA's Deputy Whip in the National Assembly. She has a Doctorate in Education and a Law degree from the University of South Africa. Following a career in academia, Dr Lotriet entered politics and became a DA ward councillor in Mangaung in 2000.

According to the Assembly Rules, whenever the Speaker is absent or unable to perform the functions of his or her office, or when that office is vacant, the Deputy Speaker must act as Speaker. The Deputy Speaker presides over a sitting of the House whenever requested to do so. She also presides over the meetings of the Rules Committee and Programme Committee when the Speaker

is absent or when requested to do so.

Similarly, he or she co-chairs with the Chairperson of the Council meetings of the Joint Programme Committee, Joint Rules Committee, and the

Joint Tagging Mechanism when the Speaker is absent. Under NA Rule 217, he or she is the Chairperson of the Assembly Disciplinary Committee. The Speaker may also delegate other functions to the Deputy Speaker. 🗳️

*“Before becoming a Member of Parliament, Ms Didiza worked in various capacities, including as the secretary-general of the Women's National Coalition, which produced the Women's Charter for Effective Equality that was tabled in the 1st Parliament.”*

*“New Deputy Speaker Dr Lotriet joined Parliament in 2009 and served as the Democratic Alliance's (DA) Shadow Ministers of Arts and Culture, of Higher Education and Training, and of Science and Technology.”*



# National Assembly elects Cyril Ramaphosa as President of the Republic of South Africa

*President Cyril Ramaphosa has been re-elected South Africa's President by the newly elected Members of the 7th Parliament, but not without contestation. His re-election had to go through a ballot for him to get enough votes to endorse his nomination and re-election, reports Abel Mputing.*

In accepting his re-election, President Ramaphosa said, "I am humbled and honoured that members of this National Assembly have, through their votes tonight, decided to elect me as President of the Republic of South Africa. It will once again be a privilege to serve this great nation in the

position of President. This is a big responsibility."

He also thanked the leaders of the various political parties who have entrusted him with the role and whose support inspire him to undertake this big task. He stressed the need to work collectively to put the interest of the country above party-political interests. "Your messages are a clear clarion call to work together. Your messages constitute a well of encouragement, good advice and wisdom. I will draw insights from them. I do believe that there is much I will learn from what you said."

He also promised the newly elected Members of the National Assembly that his re-election will be at the service of all South Africans, irrespective of their political affiliation or persuasion. "We are all South Africans, and I will serve all and work with all. I would like to thank the Members of this august House who have voted for me and who, through their vote, have invested and placed their trust in me. I intend to work with all

members and even those who did not find their way to vote for me."

He characterised the highly contested and, at times, divisive elections as the birth of a new political era. "That several parties that had opposed each other but that represent most South African voters have decided to work together to deliver this result has given birth to a new era for our country," he said.

Referring to the remarks he made at the Electoral Commission of South Africa's (IEC) results announcement ceremony, he said the results of the election show that South Africans want their political parties to work together to resolve the country's challenges. "The results of the election have made plain that the people of South Africa expect their leaders to work together to meet their needs. They expect the parties for which they have voted to find common ground, to overcome their differences, to act and work together for the good of everyone."

President Ramaphosa said the recent elections gave political parties a new political mandate to achieve the ideals enshrined in Constitution. "The stark reality of the results of our past election is that no single party represented in this House achieved an outright majority to work alone legislatively or at the executive level. Through their votes, our people expect all parties to work together within the framework of our Constitution and work together as political parties to achieve the objectives of a democratic society based on non-racialism, non-sexism and justice and to ensure stability and peace. Our focus must therefore be to tackle the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, and promote prosperity for all," he said.

"It is in this context," he said, "that some political parties resolved to form or be part of the Parliament and a government of national unity – a historic juncture in the life of our country." This requires everyone to work and act together to entrench South African's constitutional democracy and the rule of law, with a clear intent to build a South Africa for all its people, he said.

"It is with this in mind that I hereby declare that I accept the mission you are giving me. To work with you all to serve the people of South Africa." President Ramaphosa urged the newly elected members of the National Assembly to work hard to "give effect to the will of our people".

*"I am humbled and honoured that members of this National Assembly have, through their votes tonight, decided to elect me as President of the Republic of South Africa."*

### Messages from political leaders in the NA on the re-election of the President



**Mr John Steenhuisen, Leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA)**

Mr President, congratulations on your re-election. Today is a historic day for our country. It's a start of a new chapter, a new chapter of building, a new chapter of cooperation, a new chapter of us putting our country and its interests and its future first. In this election, the voters chose not to give any party majority votes. In doing so, they say they want us to work together to build a prosperous, non-racial, united South Africa with a growing economy that works for everybody.



**Mr Julius Malema, Leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)**

We contested because we wanted to demonstrate to South Africans that we don't agree to this marriage of convenience that seeks to consolidate the white monopoly power over the economy and means of production of South Africa.

This marriage is a marriage that seeks to undermine the changing patterns of property relations in South Africa. We refused to be sell-outs. We never did so when we were young and we would never do so today and, also, we don't have a history of being collaborators.



**Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa, Leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)**

This is a beginning of a new era. The IFP stands ready to serve in the government of national unity, knowing that South Africa has been utterly changed by the 2024 general elections results and by the decision that has been taken in the best interest of our country.



**Gayton Mackenzie, Leader of the Patriotic Alliance (PA)**

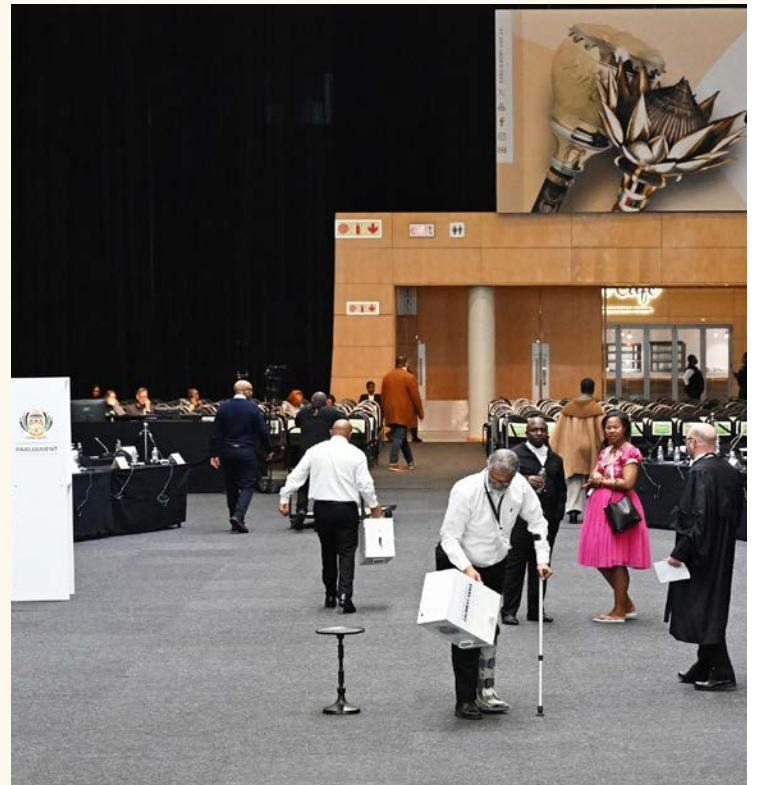
This country has another chance and, when you get a second chance, you must use it optimally. I think the voters gave all of us another chance. I would like to congratulate the ANC for accepting the results, even if they didn't get 50% of the results. The world is full of stories of Presidents who

accept results only if they get over 50% results. I will support the government of national unity and I am proud of it.



**Mr Bantu Holomisa, Leader of the United Democratic Movement (UDM)**

The problems facing South Africa are well-documented and they require a Marshall Plan [the Marshall Plan, proposed by the then United States Secretary of State George Marshall in 1947, enabled the US to provide economic assistance to restore economic infrastructure in post-World War II Europe] to tackle them with a sound implementation strategy. Laziness and lack of discipline must not characterise the new government. Let's all go back to work to serve the interests of our country. 🇿🇦





# Record Number of Political Parties Represented in 7th Parliament

*The 7th Parliament set a new record, with 18 political parties taking up seats in the national legislature, including seven new parties that are coming to Parliament for the first time. Sakhile Mokoena reports.*

of elected representatives from 230 in the 6th Parliament to 159 in the seventh parliamentary term. The Democratic Alliance showed a slight increase, from 84 in the sixth parliamentary term to 87 in the seventh.

The Economic Freedom Fighters lost five seats, from 44 in the 6th Parliament to 39 in the 7th Parliament, while the Inkatha Freedom Party grew from 14 to 17. The United Democratic Movement and Al Jama-ah

grew by one seat each and will now have three and two MPs in the National Assembly (NA), respectively. The African Transformation Movement will also have two seats, while Good and the PAC have one seat each. The African Christian Democratic Party also returns to Parliament with three MPs, one fewer than they had in the previous term.

The 7th Parliament sees the highest number of political parties represented since

1994. The 1st Parliament had seven political parties, with 13 in the 2nd Parliament and 12 in the third. The number of parties remained at 13 in both the fourth and fifth parliamentary terms, while the 6th Parliament had 14. The number of women parliamentarians has slightly decreased in the seventh parliament to 43.5% from the 45% representation in the sixth parliamentary term.

During a ceremony in which

the Electoral Commission of South Africa and the Chief Justice handed over the list of new MPs to Parliament, the Secretary to Parliament, Mr Xolile George, said despite the slight decrease in the number of women MPs, Parliament remains in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) top 10 parliaments with the highest representation of women.

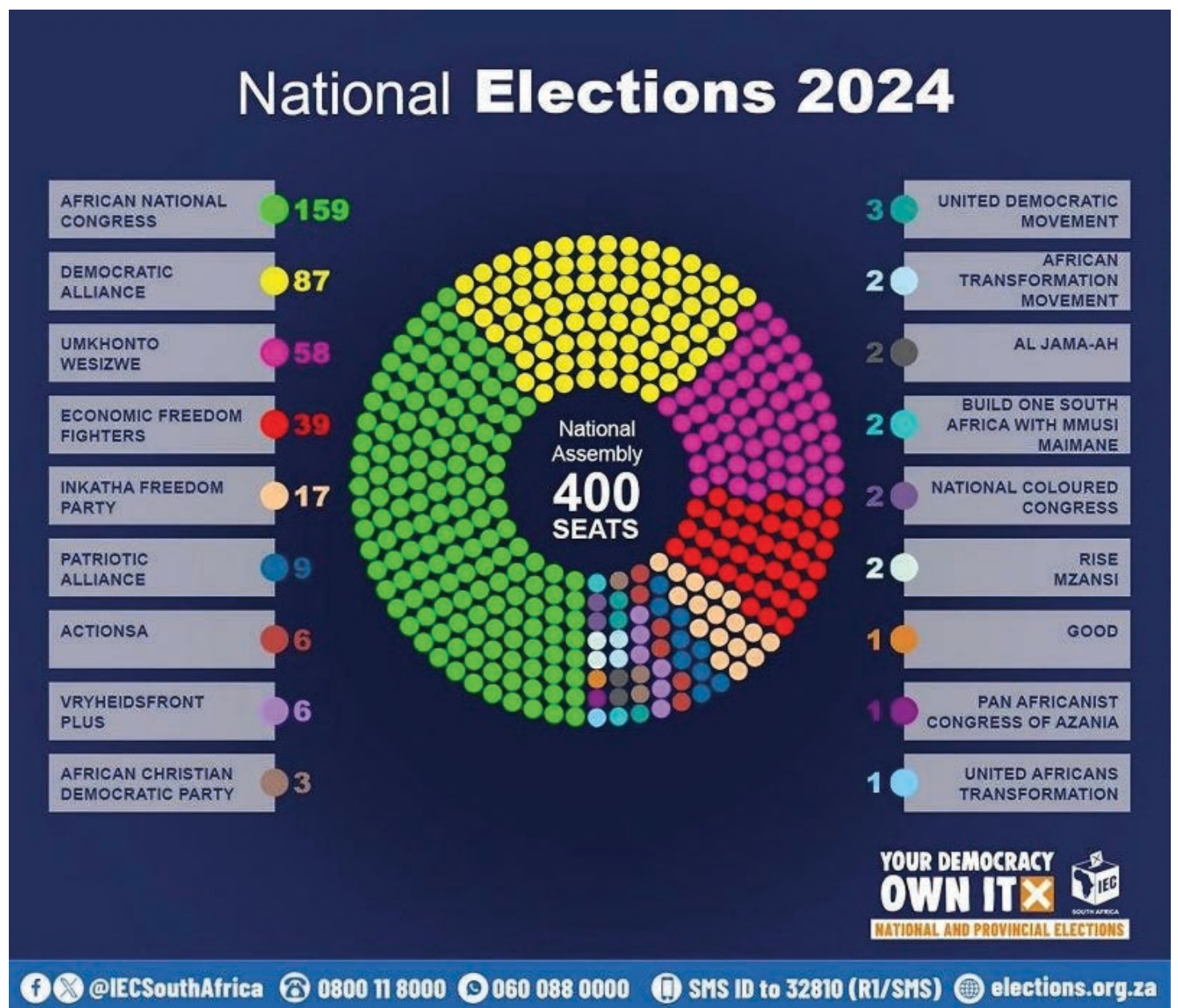
"The National Assembly remains committed to ensuring gender parity and continues to be a significant player on the global stage for its effort in promoting women's representation," Mr George said.

The list of MPs also includes many young people, with nearly 50% of members aged between 20 and 50 years. Ten MPs are between 20 and 29 years of age, 67 are between the ages of 30 and 39, 110 are aged 40 to 49, and the 50 to 59-year-olds are 110 in total. There are 90 MPs aged 60 to 69, while only 11 are 70 and above.

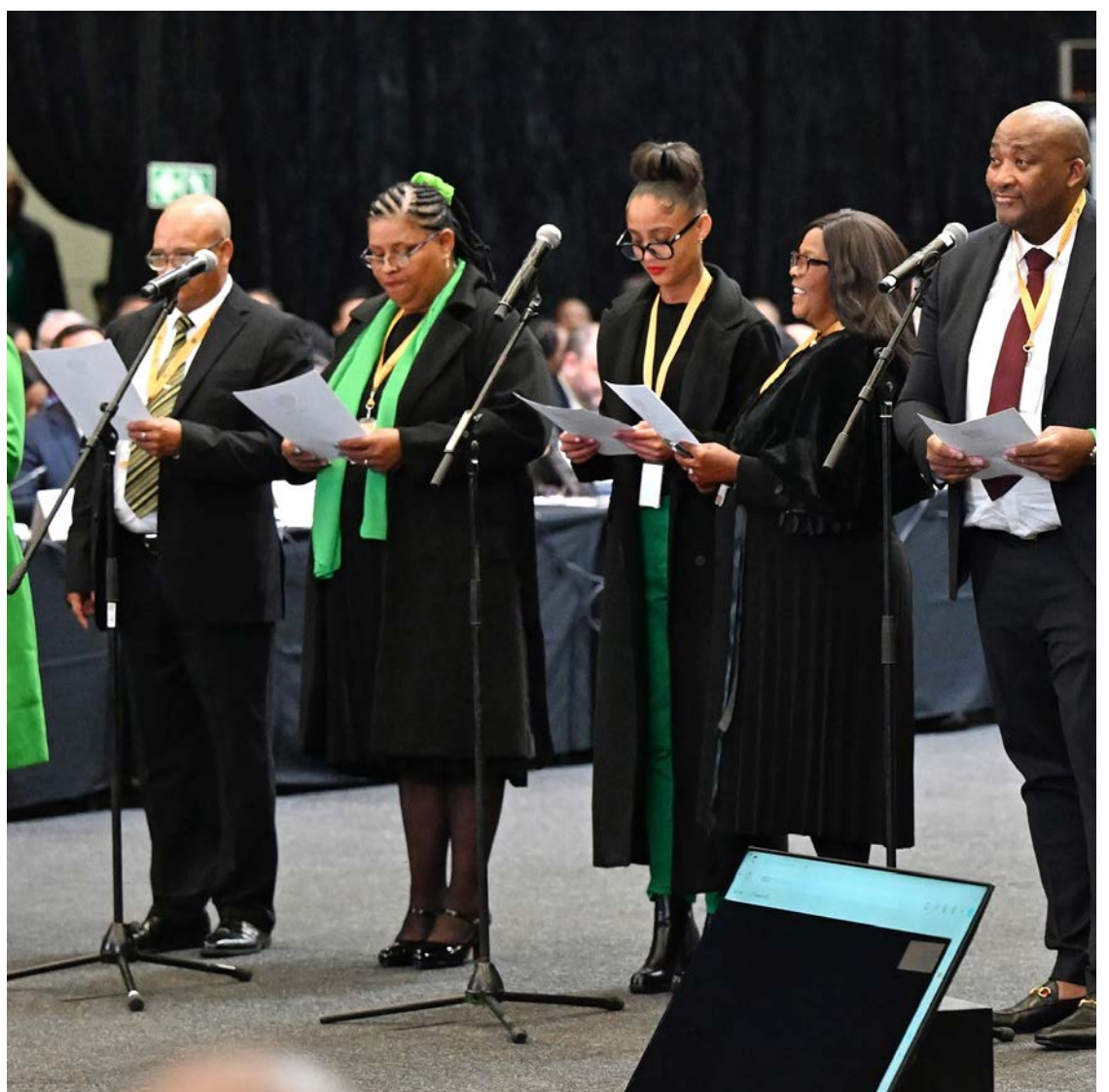
The new parties that earned parliamentary seats for the first time after the 29 May general elections include the uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MK) with 58 seats, the Patriotic Alliance (PA) with nine seats and Action SA with six seats. Rise Mzansi, the National Coloured Congress (NCC) and Build One South Africa (BOSA) will have two seats each, while the United Africans Transformation (UAT) party earned one seat.

Three political parties that had representation in the previous Parliament failed to secure any seats in the 7th Parliament – the Congress of the People (COPE), the African Independent Congress (AIC) and the National Freedom Party (NFP).

One of the main historical developments in the 7th Parliament is that no political party achieved an outright majority in the elections. The African National Congress saw a large decline in their number



# Through the Lens: National Assembly's First Sitting









## Congratulations and well wishes pour in for new NCOP Chairperson

*Heads of delegations from the various provinces and representatives of political parties represented in the NCOP congratulated the new Chairperson, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane. Sibongile Maputi reports.*

On 15 June, Chief Justice

Raymond Zondo swore in 54 permanent delegates to the NCOP in line with constitutional requirements. Ms Mtshweni-Tsipane was elected unopposed as Chairperson and Mr Kenny Mmoiemang was elected as the Chief Whip. Ms Mtshweni-Tsipane served as Mpumalanga's Premier in the sixth administration and this experience will come in handy in her new role.

Ms Mtshweni-Tsipane said that the NCOP will consider its constitutionally mandated task of ensuring provincial interests are considered in Parliament's work. She noted the NCOP

flagship programmes, including Taking Parliament to the People and Provincial Week, and said the NCOP must work to deepen intergovernmental cooperation.

Newly elected Chief Whip Mr Mmoiemang said the administration will continue with the journey started by "our forebears". "Every voice and persuasion will be heard and will be the hallmark of our approach in this honourable House," he added.

The new Premier of Limpopo, Ms Phophi Ramathuba, said the Chairperson will be busy

in the first few months of her new job, as new Members of Parliament inundate her with requests and approvals all seeking to improve the lives of the people so that the country moves forward.

"We are here because people have voted for us. Our people are not looking for slogans, [they] are not interested in the ideology. They are not interested in how much you can unpack Marxism. Our people want jobs, water and electricity," Ms Ramathuba said.

Nkosi Mwelo Nonkonyana

from the Eastern Cape said the ANC had delegated a person who could be trusted and who has proven to be more than capable for the position of Chairperson.

The President of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) called on the Chairperson to build on the work done during the sixth Parliament and committed SALGA to deepening relations with the NCOP in the context of cooperative and intergovernmental governance. 🇿🇦





## New NCOP Chairperson Calls on Permanent Delegates to be Agents for their Communities

*In accepting her election as the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, has called on the permanent delegates to the NCOP to work as active agents in the ongoing interactions with provinces they represent, writes Sibongile Maputi.*

She said under her guidance, the NCOP will work to enhance, foster and maintain dynamic relations with provinces and the communities they serve.

“The significance of the ongoing interaction with communities cannot be over-emphasised. Our country is still faced with a variety of developmental challenges, like the inclusion of women,

job-creation, economic growth. As permanent delegates to the NCOP, we must strive to work cooperatively with all our partners, including the South African Local Government Association and the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa,” she said.

The permanent delegates to the 7th Parliament were sworn in by Chief Justice, Raymond Zondo. The sitting also elected Mr Kenny Mmoiemang as the Council’s Chief Whip.

The Chairperson of the NCOP is committed to what she referred to as institutionalised public participation and oversight, where the NCOP goes to the communities and interacts with the people through established programmes like Taking Parliament to the People, Provincial Week and Local Government Week.

“The NCOP must improve on these institutionalised programmes. From the planning phase of all three spheres of government,

through to the execution of its functions, the NCOP is strategically positioned to improve the lives of South Africans. We must address the uncertainty rife in intergovernmental relations and address who takes responsibility for executive decisions and commitments,” she stressed.

She said the NCOP needed to conduct an impact-driven oversight and that her office remained open to all “as we traverse the era of transformation”.

The NCOP is constituted to fulfil complementary constitutional responsibilities. The House comprises 100 delegates, including 90 delegates – 10 from each province and a ten-person non-voting delegation of the South African Local Government Association (Salga). The 10 elected representatives from each province are subdivided into six permanent delegates and four non-permanent members.

The House will elect Deputy

Chairpersons and House Chairpersons of the NCOP at a later date. In terms of the Constitution, the NCOP must elect a Chairperson and two Deputy Chairpersons from among the delegates. The Chairperson and one of the Deputy Chairpersons are elected to serve for five years unless their terms as delegates expire earlier. The other Deputy Chairperson is elected for a term of one year and must be succeeded by a delegate from another province, so that every province has a turn to be represented.

The NCOP plays a unique role in promoting the principles of

cooperative government and intergovernmental relations. It ensures that the three spheres of government work together in performing their unique functions according to the Constitution.

The NCOP is one of the two Houses of Parliament. It is constitutionally mandated to ensure that provincial interests are considered in the national sphere of government. This is done through participation in the national legislative process and by providing a national forum for the consideration of issues affecting provinces. 🌐

*“The NCOP must improve on these institutionalised programmes. From the planning phase of all three spheres of government, through to the execution of its functions, the NCOP is strategically positioned to improve the lives of South Africans.”*



## Who Are the New Leaders of the NCOP?

*The new Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, was previously the Premier of Mpumalanga from 2018 until the end of the sixth term in May 2024.*

She had been a Member of the Provincial Legislature since 2014, serving as the Chairperson of various committees, including the Co-operative Governance and Human Settlements Committee and the Select Committee on Women, Children, and People with Disabilities. She previously served as the MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs from 2014 to 2018 and has held several political positions within the provincial structures of the African National Congress.

The new Chief Whip of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Kenneth Mmoiemang (picture below), was also elected unopposed to this position. He first joined Parliament in 2019 and has served as the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Transport, Public Service and Administration, Public Works and Infrastructure, and of the Ad Hoc Committee on the General Intelligence Laws Amendment Bill. He was the Speaker of the Northern Cape Legislature from 2014 to 2019. 🇿🇦

*Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane is the new NCOP Chairperson and Mr Kenneth Mmoiemang the Chief Whip.*





# Seventh Parliament Established: Members of Parliament Reflect on a Historic Occasion

*In historic scenes at the International Convention Centre in Cape Town over the weekend of 14 and 15 June 2024, the head of the judicial arm of the state swore in new Members of Parliament to establish the 7th Parliament. Sibongile Maputi asked some new MPs about their impressions of this new era in South Africa's 30-year democracy.*



**Mr Joseph Maswanganyi,  
(Member of the National  
Assembly)**

"Being an MP comes with lots of responsibilities because the electorate – the South African people – bestowed on us the responsibility to take care of their lives. [In Parliament] we discuss many issues of national interest, such as jobs for young people. We have to deliver. They need better educational facilities. Some universities do not have enough accommodation. Then there is the matter of land

that must be addressed – NHI (National Health Insurance), poverty, inequality – as an MP I have to make sure they are delivered in this term of office.



**Thamsanqa Mabhena  
(Member of the National  
Assembly)**

"Today marks a historic shift in the political landscape of our country. Our democracy has matured, and this seventh administration will be critical in ensuring that the aspirations of millions of voters out there are realised, and that people

can reach their full potential. My reflection on the historic government of national unity (GNU) is that at the centre of it is the universally shared respect for, and defence of, our Constitution and the rule of law, including the Bill of Rights – in its entirety. South Africans are looking at us to ensure that the basic minimum programme of this GNU must be to change the material conditions of the people for the better, enabling citizens to reach their full potential.

"The prospect of collaboration presents the unique opportunity to confront seemingly insurmountable adversity with innovative solutions. I am pleased to witness South Africans doing what South Africans do best – working together. This combined effort, however, must be geared toward economic growth, poverty alleviation, corruption eradication, quality education, and safer communities."

*"... we discuss many issues of national interest, such as jobs for young people. We have to deliver."*

– Mr Joseph Maswanganyi

*"I am pleased to witness South Africans doing what they do best – working together."*

– Mr Thamsanqa Mabhena



**Babalwa Mathulelwa**  
(Member of the National Assembly)

"I am from eMahlubini in Matatiele in the Eastern Cape. I am a returning MP in the seventh administration. I joined [Parliament] in 2020. I was a member of the [Portfolio Committee] of Small Business [Development]. We are here as Members of Parliament to get our land back so that we can distribute it. It is my passion. I am a Member of Parliament so I can fight for people's rights and to take care of the needs of the previously disadvantaged. And we are here in Parliament to get people financial freedom."



**Liam Jacobs (Permanent Delegate to the National Council of Provinces)**

"Events today ushered in a moment for more responsive responsibility and accountability for provinces on service delivery issues and served as a reminder that, as public servants, we are agents of change, as said by the new Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane.

As a woman in this role, she demonstrates that the African National Congress takes parity and equity seriously. Young people are now joining the ranks of the NCOP, which will also bring a new energy to its work. I hope we will prioritise the matters left by 6th Parliament that are key and important for all parties and the country. I am committed to working in a manner that is open to continuously learning about working with other political parties."



**Jane Mananiso (Permanent Delegate to the NCOP for Gauteng)**

"It is a humbling experience to be elected to serve in the 7th Parliament as a Permanent Delegate to the National Council of Provinces. My election to Parliament presents a unique opportunity for me to be a voice for young people and the residents of my home province, the Northern Cape.

"The NCOP is a distinct House of Parliament where provincial and local government issues are expressed. This House of Parliament is very important, as it is a national forum for public debate on important issues affecting the provinces. It ensures that local government concerns are represented at the highest level. The swearing-in ceremony for new and returning members was a solemn ceremony that lasted just over two hours. In this ceremony, presided over by the Chief Justice of South Africa, Raymond Zondo, I saw the election of the Chairperson of the House

and Chief Whip of the Council elected unopposed. I am truly honoured to be part of this historic moment in our country.

"As young people, we should lead from the front and ensure that the foundations laid down before us are strengthened for future generations, as we have a role to play to make South Africa a good place to live."



**Ofentse Jeremiah Mokae**  
(Permanent delegate to the NCOP)

"Being entrusted with this responsibility also means I must work tirelessly to address the critical issues facing our nation, such as high unemployment rates, access to quality education, and the need for skills development. I am committed to using my platform to advocate for innovative solutions that will create opportunities and improve the lives of all South Africans.

"Furthermore, today is a historic moment for South Africa. For the first time since 1994, the African National Congress has lost its majority, resulting in the formation of the government of national unity. The Democratic Alliance, as a member of the GNU, has a crucial role to play in driving much-needed change. I am excited by this unique opportunity of working with other members of the GNU to ensure that the challenges facing South Africa are effectively addressed." 🇿🇦

*"... I am a Member of Parliament so I can fight for people's rights..."*

– Ms Babalwa Mathulelwa

*"I hope we will prioritise the matters left by the 6th Parliament that are key and important for all parties to work together."*

– Mr Liam Jacobs

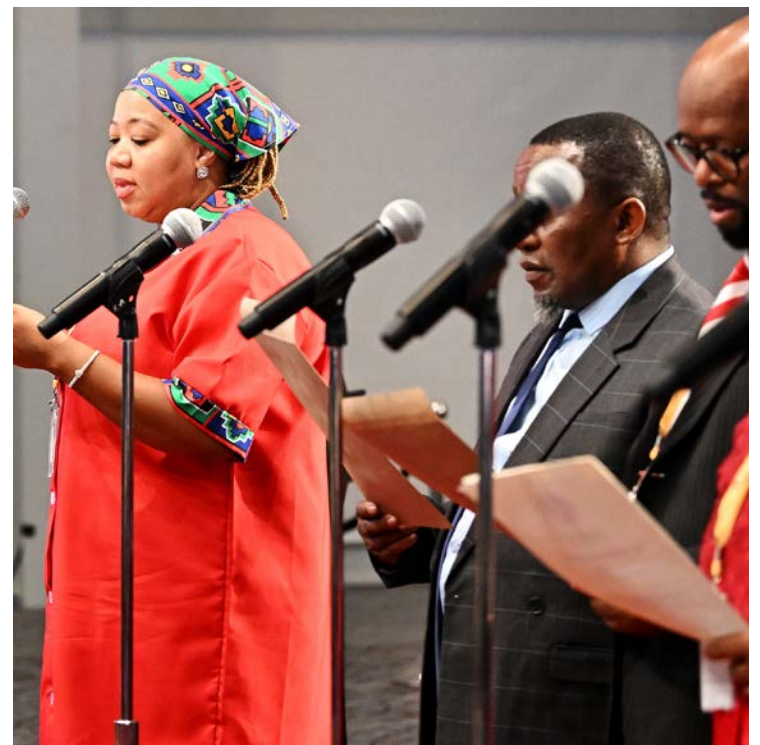
*"As young people we must lead from the front."*

– Ms Jane Mananiso

*"Being entrusted with this responsibility also means I must work tirelessly to address critical issues facing our nation..."*

– Mr Ofentse Mokae

# Through the Lens: National Council of Provinces' First Sitting









Mr Khulekani Mathe, CEO of BUSA

## Business Unity South Africa Calls on New Government to Cut Red Tape & Reduce Crime

*Insession writer Jabulani Majazi spoke to the CEO designate of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), Mr Khulekani Mathe, on the organisation's expectations for the 7th Parliament. BUSA represents business interests that have shares in government entities.*

Mr Mathe said South Africa's compound annual growth rate from 2013 to 2023 was only 1.8%, falling well below the 5% or higher rate of growth in gross domestic product needed to create more jobs and significantly reduce unemployment. Furthermore, with just six years remaining until 2030, it is apparent that little progress has been made in achieving the targets outlined in the National Development Plan.

Mr Mathe said that business leaders believe it is imperative to urge government and legislatures to prioritise policies and legislation that will stimulate economic growth. Achieving South

Africa's various socio-economic development and transformation goals hinges on fostering inclusive economic growth.

Another issue for BUSA is South Africa's crime rate, which it says is far too high. Crime not only jeopardises the quality of life of all citizens, especially women and children, but it also hinders legitimate income generation in both formal and informal sectors. It also increases the cost of doing business, deters tourists and discourages essential investment.

To this end, BUSA urges the government and legislatures in the seventh administration

to dedicate their full attention to enacting laws and implementing policies that fortify the criminal justice system, enhance crime detection and prevention, and ensure the apprehension and prosecution of perpetrators.

In addition, Mr Mathe added, BUSA expects the government and legislatures to continue championing the structural reform agenda spearheaded by the sixth administration. To drive inclusive growth and development, the state must be innovative in establishing a legislative framework that attracts investment and leverages the collective financial, scientific, innovative, and executive capabilities of both the private and public sectors.

BUSA also urges legislatures to fulfil their oversight roles by holding the executive accountable for executing adopted plans. Genuine improvements in the public sector can only be realised if there are tangible repercussions for failing to meet performance expectations and engaging in misconduct, he said.

Reducing red tape for ease of doing business

Mr Mathe also stressed the importance of the interventions taken by the sixth administration, noting that President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed highly regarded businessman Mr Siphon Nkosi to lead an initiative to

streamline government red tape and a Red Tape Reduction Unit was established in the Presidency for this purpose. The unit has since compiled a comprehensive report outlining necessary actions and BUSA firmly believes that implementing the report's recommendations will significantly decrease red tape.

Red tape – such as burdensome laws, by-laws, and regulations – impedes establishing businesses and hampers their operation and growth. Such bureaucratic hurdles can include excessive registration requirements, industry-specific demands and arduous compliance standards. Another aspect of red tape is the amalgamation of excessive regulations and inefficiencies within the public sector, resulting in prolonged delays for straightforward tasks, and causing businesses to wait long for decisions on critical applications. Examples include the protracted processing times for water-use licences, mining permits, visa applications, and land-use applications.

Therefore, a more effective approach to reducing red tape involves ensuring that the government employs public servants with the requisite skills and attitudes to perform their duties efficiently. Additionally, the government can benefit from embracing new technology to streamline many tasks necessary to support businesses, said Mr Mathe. 🇿🇦

*“Crime not only jeopardises the quality of life of all citizens, especially women and children, but it also hinders legitimate income generation in both formal and informal sectors.”*



## COSATU Welcomes Members of the 7th Parliament

Mr Matthew Park, COSATU Parliamentary Coordinator

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*Insession writer Yoliswa Landu spoke to COSATU's Parliamentary Coordinator, Mr Matthew Parks, on the expectations of the trade union federation from the 7th Parliament.*

The Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU) welcomes the new Members of Parliament and wishes them well. South Africans, particularly working-class communities, depend on Parliament to help the Government of National Unity turn South Africa around.

COSATU has a long history of working with Parliament since the dawn of democracy. We look forward to helping the 7th Parliament on this important journey. We are in alliance with the African National Congress, but we recognise the important role of all MPs and look forward to working together to address society's many dire socio-economic challenges. Unemployment does not care about one's party preferences. Our doors are open to all Members of Parliament for engagements and solutions.

Our difficulties during the decade of state capture are well known. We hope this Parliament will continue efforts to raise the role and stature of Parliament and not be distracted by partisan

point-scoring.

Parliament's role in passing budgets and bills and receiving reports from government is well known. Parliament should not simply be a recipient of government's programme but proactively engage and interrogate it.

Parliament has the power to amend the budget and should do so when necessary, e.g. to adjust the Social Relief of Distress Grant for inflation or ensure government's industrial financing programmes are adequately resourced.

More needs to be done to hold government accountable for implementation and not simply to accept departments failing to spend money

whilst communities need infrastructure investment. The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) needs to be much more aggressive in holding municipalities to account when they fail to pay employees and service providers or provide municipal services.

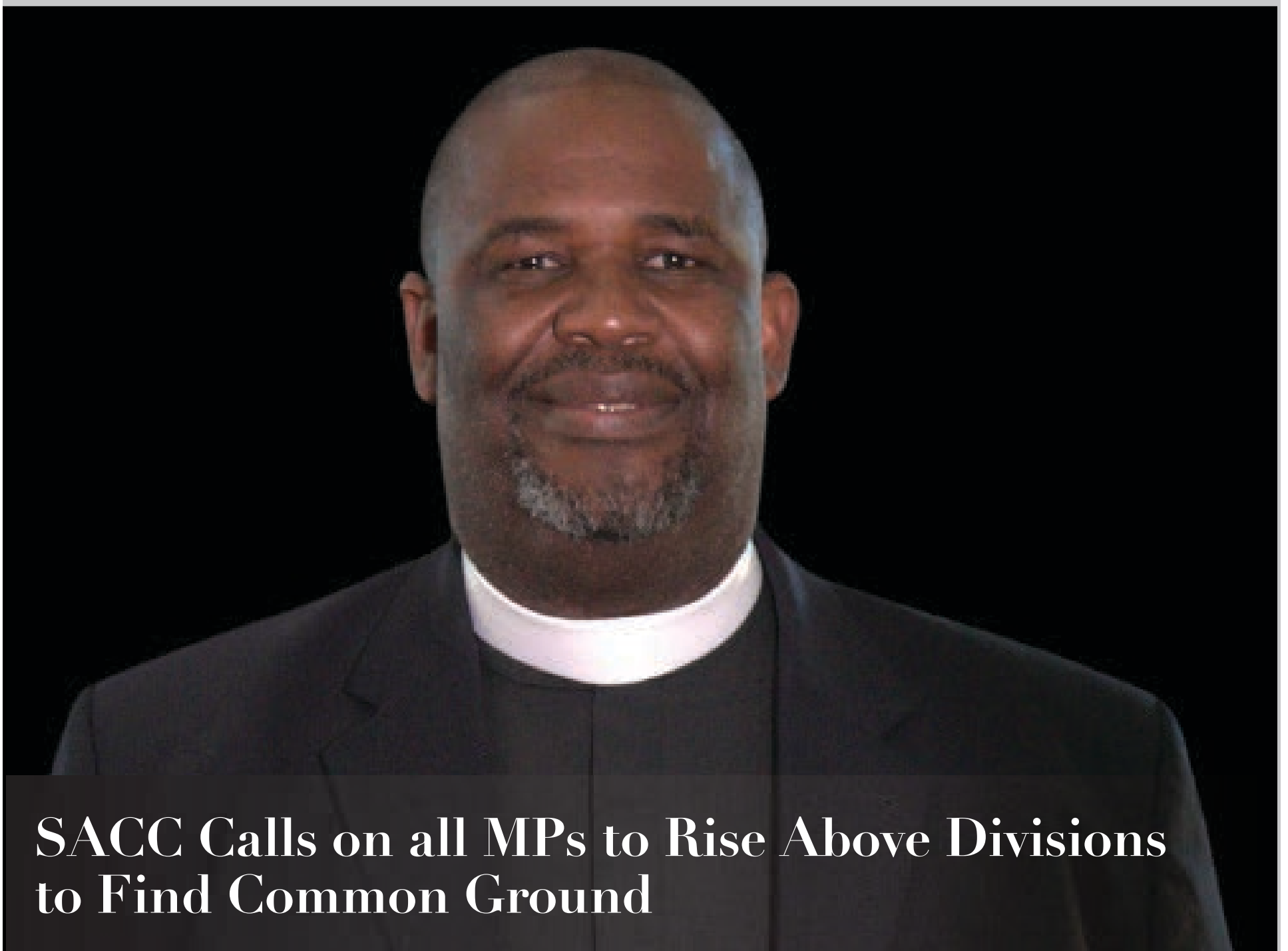
We have witnessed departments failing to table bills for years in Parliament or bills being stalled in the National Assembly. These delays have a real impact on ordinary workers who may have needed the relief such legislation would provide.

Parliament has done well in most instances to fulfill its constitutional mandate to ensure active public participation, though all

too often the NCOP has cut corners.

The decreasing levels of voter turnout are due to a society exhausted by state institutions' inability to grow the economy and create jobs, tackle crime and corruption, and deliver quality public services. It is also due to the public shamed by the behaviour of some, not all, politicians who fail to uphold their oath of office.

We trust and hope the 7th Parliament will meet workers, their families and society's expectations. COSATU will be a partner in this journey. We need this Parliament and government to succeed in creating a better life for all South Africans. 🇿🇦



## SACC Calls on all MPs to Rise Above Divisions to Find Common Ground

Rev Mzwandile Molo, Acting Secretary-General of SACC

*Insession writer, Mava Lukani, spoke to the Acting Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), Rev Mzwandile Molo, on the SACC's expectations for the seventh Parliament.*

Rev Molo said: "We pray for of a just, reconciled and equitable and sustainable society, free of racial, tribal, xenophobic and gender prejudices, free of corruption and deprivation and with enough food and shelter for every citizen; and for each child born to grow to their God-given potential. We believe that the commencement of the

work of the seventh National Assembly is yet another opportunity for the country to find its way to such a future. This, the SACC believes, is to be built on what the Constitution's preamble calls us to be.

"Our people, in their diverse political choices, have, in trust, given all National Assembly members this sacred responsibility. The voice of our people through the recent elections clearly instructs our political leaders to rise above divisions to seek common ground. We as a country face many challenges. Therefore, our expectations of the seventh Parliament of South Africa are high. We believe that members from various political parties must commit to building a legislative and oversight architecture that reflects the values of inclusivity, transparency, cooperation and integrity.

"In our view the National Assembly is a sacred space where the concerns and hopes of our people take centre stage in the conversation by the people's representatives. It must be a space for dignity, mutual respect, truth-telling and informed conversation in the process of legislation and oversight. We expect that the laws to be enacted must deal decisively with the challenges of poverty and economic exclusion, gender-based violence and femicide, healing and reconciliation, and comprehensive quality education, amongst other things.

"In the oversight work, we expect the National Assembly to be in the forefront of fighting corruption. The executive must be held accountable, regardless of political affiliation, and enablers of corruption should not find a hiding place in or through the Assembly.

The higher call of oversight demands of the Assembly to make sure that those who benefit in our government work are the poor and vulnerable.

"The SACC calls on the seventh Parliament to embody the spirit of servant leadership, ensure robust oversight,

and actively promote public involvement in parliamentary activities. By committing to these democratic principles, we can forge a path of unity and progress and address socio-economic challenges and build a thriving, just society for a brighter, more equitable future." 🙏

*"We pray for a just, reconciled and equitable and sustainable society, free of racial, tribal, xenophobic and gender prejudices, free of corruption and deprivation and with enough food and shelter for every citizen; and for each child born to grow to their God-given potential."*



#### **OUR SOUTH AFRICA – THE SUN**

The sun heals the divisions of the past, improves the quality of life of all South Africans, frees the potential of each person and builds a united and democratic South Africa, taking its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.



#### **OUR PEOPLE – THE PROTEA LEAVES**

Our people, building on the foundation of a democratic and open society, freely elect representatives, acting as a voice of the people and providing a national forum for public consideration of issues.



#### **OUR PARLIAMENT – THE DRUM**

The drum calls the people's Parliament, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, to consider national and provincial issues, ensuring government by the people under the Constitution.



#### **OUR CONSTITUTION – THE BOOK**

Our Constitution lays the foundation for a democratic and open society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. It is the supreme law of our country, and ensures government by the people.