

**FAREWELL SPEECH ON THE OCCASSION OF END
OF FIRST SESSION OF THE 4TH PARLIAMENT, ON THE
12TH NOVEMBER 2009**

Deputy Speaker

Honourable Members

As the year draws to a close, it is time for us to review progress made thus far and bid farewell to members as we come to the end of this year's session. This has been a busy year for all of us, particularly for new members who have had much to learn and adapt to. They have certainly had to hit the road running.

The new government has effected several changes to the structure of ministries and government departments, and therefore we have had to align some of the Committees accordingly. This has been no small task, so we

acknowledge, with thanks, the work of the National Assembly table and the Committee Section in this regard.

I would like to touch on a few highlights from this session of the 4th Parliament and to report on progress made on certain issues. Members would have noticed that the Policy Imperatives document setting out the strategic framework, including the vision and strategic objectives has been tabled.

The strategic framework was developed and based on the provisions set out in the Constitution, and the numerous planning sessions that were conducted in both the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces. These planning sessions included active participation and direction by Presiding Officers, Office Bearers, Political Parties and Members.

The strategic framework highlights the Vision of the 4th

Parliament as:

To build an effective people's Parliament that is responsive to the needs of the people and that is driven by the ideal of realising a better quality of life for all the people of South Africa.

Under the stewardship of the Deputy Secretary, Mr Coetzee, and the House Chairperson, Mr Bapela, the implementation of the Oversight and Accountability Model adopted by the National Assembly earlier this year is progressing well.

The Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act (2009) will extend the scope of our oversight framework. However its implementation is a complex and intricate matter which will involve a range of institutional reforms. A political task team has been established, led

by the House Chairpersons and the committees, on finance and appropriations.

Not without controversy, Parliament has also facilitated appointments to the South African Human Rights Commission, the Board of the South African Broadcasting Corporation and oversaw the appointment a new Public Protector. We wish them all success in their endeavours within the respective institutions. Our thanks must go to Ministers, Chairs of Committees and members who participated in ensuring that this and other business have been dealt with.

We have successfully concluded some important business of Parliament for example, the State of the Nation address for 2009 and the Medium Term Budget. We have also had three Joint Sittings of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces. The first was to celebrate Mandela Day; yesterday, we welcomed the new Chief

Justice Ngcobo and bid farewell to retired Chief Justice Langa, and on Tuesday, we discussed preparations for the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup. This is testimony to the fact that Parliament is a national forum for public consideration of issues of importance to our people.

On a lighter note during the answers to the President's State of the Nation address, FIFA presented the Confederations Cup trophy to President Zuma. This was a highly symbolic gesture designed to illustrate the connections between the people's game, which is football and the people's Parliament!

I have also received a letter from the Chief Whip of the Majority Party regarding the establishment of a multi-party forum on issues related to nation building. The Chief Whip makes useful proposals on how he sees the Parliamentary Millennium Programme as being a vehicle for the renewed call for nation building, social cohesion, Africa

advancement and International cooperation. He envisages a multi-party forum as leading this programme in building bridges of understanding amongst South Africans and thus taking forward the concept of an activist Parliament. These proposals will receive attention next year when we implement the strategic plan for this Parliament.

Parliament has hosted a number of incoming delegations from strategic partners in the international community, including, among others, high-level delegations from the People's Republic of China, and the Speaker of Nigeria. These and other delegations have interacted with Parliamentarians as a component of the expanding role which the national Parliament is playing in pursuit of our strategic objectives in bilateral and multilateral forums. At a domestic level we have hosted a delegation from the Royal Bafokeng Nation led by Kgosi Leruo Molotlegi. This visit was a first of its' kind and they have expressed

appreciation for the opportunity to interact with national Parliament.

Honourable Members, the World Cup will focus considerable international attention on South Africa next year. The programme of Parliament for 2010 had to take into account the World Cup tournament and this means that our work in the first and second terms has to be programmed to ensure that Parliament adjourns in time for members to be part of this important event. We anticipate a huge influx of visitors as well as many international television crews whose platforms will beam images of our country to television screens across the world. I suspect that here in Parliament, we will also have our hands full! I encourage you to rest well over the holiday period in anticipation of a full programme in the next session.

The excitement of the Fifa 2010 World Cup cannot distract from the very important business we will still have to

attend to. Parliament's role in scrutinising the reports of our parastatals will continue in earnest next session. The reports have been tabled and we will need to look critically and carefully at the many challenges being faced by these entities. They are crucial partners with government in ensuring service delivery and Parliament has a role in appraising the performance of these entities. We seek to play an active oversight role, through criticism and support.

In the next session we will continue to give in-depth consideration to the Legacy issues from the 3rd Parliament. The Report of the Independent Panel Assessment of Parliament is presently referred to the Joint Rules Committee and the Parliamentary Oversight Authority who are to provide guidance on how the recommendations therein can be taken forward. As recommended in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of Chapter Nine and Associated Institutions,

the 3rd Parliament adopted a resolution that required the Speaker to establish a unit to support the National Assembly in coordinating its work with institutions supporting democracy. The Office of the Speaker is in the process of establishing the Unit, which we envisage will be up and running by April 2010 as a budget request has been made and approved for 2010/2011. The Space-Utilisation Project addresses the acute shortage of office space for Parliamentarians. The Presiding Officers of Parliament have agreed to prioritise the need for an office block for members.

On the issue of unanswered questions, I have raised this matter with the Leader of Government Business, the Deputy President, and he in turn, has raised the matter in Cabinet.

Honourable members, we note with sadness the passing away of two members of this House, Ms K N Shoba on the

9th May 2009 at the inauguration of the President; and Mr F T Masango on the 18th September 2009. Let us also recognise former members of Parliament who also passed away in this year:

Prof D C du Toit on 1 June 2009

Mr M J “Mokgomana” Phala on 30 July 2009

Mr J P “Past Four” Phungula on 9 August 2009

Mr M “Ginyizembe” Mpehle on 4 October 2009

Mr P O Moloto on 8 October 2009

Imam Gassan Solomon on 28 October 2009

We remember these individuals and their contributions with affection and a profound sense of loss.

Finally, I wish to thank the Deputy Speaker, Ms Mfeketo, for her support and dedication and House Chairpersons Mr Obed Bapela, Mr Ben Skosana and Ms Mildred Oliphant for their contributions to the work of the office of

the Speaker. My thanks go also to the Secretary to Parliament, Mr Zingile Dingani, and the Deputy Secretary, Mr Mike Coetzee, who lead this administration of hard-working and dedicated officials. Our best wishes to all of them during the festive season.

Although this is the last plenary of the National Assembly, committee work continues next week. Members will then have the opportunity to reconnect with their constituencies before breaking for annual leave on the 11th December. Honourable Members, drive safely and take the time to relax and enjoy your families and friends.

I hope that you return refreshed and ready to continue the sterling oversight work started this session.

Go well and be safe!