

Speaking notes

National Assembly

12 July 2024

TM Chauke - Adonis ANC (MP)

Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies

Budget Vote Debate: Budget Vote 4 (GCIS)

[6 Minutes]

Honourable Chairperson

Honourable Members of this honourable House

Fellow South Africans

I rise on behalf of the African National Congress to support budget vote 04: Government Communication Information System (GCIS). We do so with the understanding that the budget is a tool that we can use to transform and bring about effective change in our society. We advocate for a budget that is reflective and representative of all people of this country. One that prioritises programmes that address the needs of all groupings in our society, the LGBTQIA+ community, persons living with disabilities, women, youth, and children who have been previously disadvantaged and discriminated against on the basis of class, race, age, gender, ability, and sexual orientation amongst others.

Honourable members,

Technology is fast evolving, in his book ***titled: Closing the Gap*** Prof Tshilidzi Marwala makes the point that “the fourth industrial revolution is not an era that looms in the future but rather our current reality, pervading our daily lives.” As a result of this, we have witnessed a deterioration in the consumption of print media, due to the increased digitisation of goods and services. It is against this backdrop that we welcome the department’s move to digitally produce and distribute 22 editions of the Vukuzenzele newspaper per year. We equally welcome that, 13 200 Braille copies will still be produced at a projected cost of R1.6 million per year over the medium.

It is also worth noting that, digital disparities still exist in our society not only as it relates to accessibility, particularly of those in the rural and peripheral areas but, also in terms of coverage and representation on issues, challenges, and stories affecting the so called “minute groups”.

We implore the department, that, as it holds the targeted 26 engagement sessions at the national level with senior journalists and 2 engagements with government heads of

communication, as well as forum meetings such as the government communicators' forum as well as various outreach programmes such as localised community dialogues, community radio talk shows, and campaign activations in taxi ranks, shopping centres, and commuter trains. It should not forget the various structures and NGOs/NPOs that exist in communities, including engagements with traditional leaders through the *Intergovernmental Coordination and Stakeholder Management* programme.

House Chairperson,

While we can appreciate that R73.2 million will be prioritised for the provision of civic education through various media platforms such as, community radio stations, social media, television, newspapers, leaflets and flyers, we urge the government to ensure that the content is all-inclusive and fosters cohesion amongst the different groupings that exist in our society.

Making use of the District Development Model, we also look forward to seeing advanced levels of coordination and coherence between government departments, right down to the 44 districts and 8 metros across the country, in efforts to enhance service delivery. R417.1 million will be set aside for this over the medium term.

As I conclude Honourable members,

The ANC makes it clear in its election Manifesto that, ours is to promote and defend the rights of all South Africans against racism, sexism, gender-based violence, homophobia, discrimination, and other intolerances. We believe that, government programmes as supported by the budget votes will reflect this unwavering position that we strongly hold as an organisation that represents the will of the people and strongly advocates for transformation and redress.

The ANC supports this budget vote.

I thank you.