

## BUDGET VOTE 2 PARLIAMENT

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(UCDP)

As parliamentarians we depend much on support staff and if one of these diligent people departs from this world as is the case with Mr Mkhethwa Mkhize, formerly of committee section, we just say it is unfortunate as the young man was blossoming in his field.

The UCDP has come up with the slogan: "Stand up and Speak out ..." and I intend to do just that.

We are members of parliament and not portfolio committees; therefore it is remiss for anyone to say because one does not belong to some committee therefore one may not speak on matters in that committee. All those holding a different view should do is point out the correct situation not deride an MP for not belonging to a committee. There is no rule of parliament that debars anyone from speaking on any matter on the table here in parliament as long as they are relevant.

We therefore wish to appeal to those who have made gate keeping their responsibility to allow different voices to be heard on all debates.

The UCDP would like to thank the presiding officers for having come up with a baseline speaking time that has eluded them since 1999. We are aware that this they achieved with grit and determination when some in the opposition were opposed to their proposal.

That parliament is prepared to fight against corruption was demonstrated with the riddance of the then Secretary to parliament and the former Chief Financial Officer for betraying the trust given to

them. We hope all have noted that even the highest officers can fall and they will mend their ways.

The establishment of the Budget Office is a welcome development in the life of parliament. We pray much the strength of the Director so appointed that he takes the institution to a higher level so that as we in parliament speak of clean administration we should lead from the front.

The Parliamentary Oversight Authority deserves a pat on the back for updating the reviewing Travel Facilities Policy for members. They have cut down excessive use of motor vehicles by members as it lent itself to abuse; they have added special arrangements for families in the event a member dies. All these are worth writing home about but it is equally important to note that R12 026 659 spent after the contract with a service provider had expired was condoned with the approval of the auditor general. We hope with the use of the SCM system this will not recur.

Parliament should lead in paying service providers within 30 days where applicable.

It is unfortunate that the formula for international trips is a closely guarded secret which tends to be the prerogative of some parties only. Since 2010 the POA has left it on the lap of the Joint Whips' Forum to finalise. The practice of rotation of delegations seems to have been dispensed with.

As delegates of this parliament to the Pan African Parliament are elected by members of parliament and the latter ensures their upkeep there, it will be ideal that in spite of the tight programme, they be given an opportunity to report back openly and formerly as against some latching on some topic in the house during some odd

debate. Such arrangement will ensure that members of parliament are on even keel on developments in the PAP.

It is unfortunate that as much as efforts are being made to coordinate programmes of the whips of the two houses for joint meetings it is difficult. The only solace is joint rules and programming meetings called by the presiding officers succeed. This can be interpreted as lack of will-power from the whips.

While there is an improvement from the executive in attending committee meetings when invited, it is unfortunate that some still stay away even from SCOPA where they have to account for the use of monies allocated to their departments by parliament. We hope this improves unless they have something to hide or are at a loss with what is happening in their portfolios.

The UCDP will support the budget vote

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