

DEBATE ON PROVINCIAL TREASURY BUDGET VOTE, 2011

I S MFUNDISI

(UCDP)

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As we consider the budget vote on the provincial treasury one cannot help but invoke the words of Charles Dickens:

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going to heaven, we were all going the other way – in short the period was far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only”. (A Tale of Two Cities)

The present economic circumstances dictate that we should reconsider what we were promised regarding a better life. Times are the worst instead of the best that we looked forward to.

The needs tend to exceed the resources. Money is in short supply. We were made to believe that we shall have everything and yet we have nothing before us.

Step by step, year by year and village after village we have all come to notice that the epoch of belief that all will be kosher has actually turned into an epoch of incredulity; that is why people have ceased to throw their hands in the air because frustration as promises are unfulfilled they rather turn away from the noisiest authorities who insisted on the situation being received.

It is unbelievable that finances of the country can be siphoned the way they are through fronting and in some instances the appointment of undeserving, unqualified and shady people as the purported financial manager who was posted at Madibeng Municipality by a national minister, *nogal*.

Shortage of disposable income is the cause of all the instability. People earn less; not because government does not pay well but because the cost of living is rising by the day.

Motorists feel the pinch as fuel prices rise monthly nowadays yet remuneration packages take long to rise. We do not justify the rampant pilfering that is going on in government, but we are cautioning that people's expectations should not be raised as we address them.

There are times when some of us suspect that this province is set to fail so that when the day comes that provinces are reduced and others are merged together, there should be enough justification to let the North West go down first because it will have failed the litmus test.

We note that almost all departments that have presented their budgets have heeded the call for frugality and belt tightening in that they have not splashed parties to celebrate their budgets.

Money is a scarce commodity that needs to be used with great care. We have come to this podium and stated that budgets vote have to be accepted *voetstoots* as finalized by treasury while with some we cautioned the need for additional funding.

Provincial Treasury as the gate keeper of our Finances should ensure that departments submit their quarterly expenditure reports regularly and timeously.

Poor and sluggish spending has to be detected early in the year to avoid the infamous fiscal dumping in a bid to avoid funds going back to treasury.

It is unfortunate that in 2010/11 even the Treasury's audit report, though unqualified, it has matters of concern.

Let us hope for the best.

The United Christian Democratic Party will support the budget vote.

