



Publication: Mercury, The - Main
Title: MPs debate choice of agent in restoration
Publish date: 07 Mar 2023
Page: 4

Reach: 25432
AVE:R 17161.45
Author: Mayibongwe Maqhina

PARLIAMENT RECONSTRUCTION

MPs debate choice of agent in restoration

MAYIBONGWE MAQHINA
mayibongwe.maqhina@inl.co.za

PARLIAMENT has defended the selection of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) as an implementing agent for the restoration of buildings damaged by the fire last year.

This, after MPs demanded to know the criteria used to appoint DBSA and why it was chosen.

On Friday, Secretary to Parliament, Xolile George, told the joint standing committee on financial management of Parliament they had looked for an organ of state to provide infrastructure solutions as it would take the national legislature some time to build project management capacity.

George said the DBSA had the capacity to manage project implementation and their fee was fairly competitive.

DA MP Madeleine Hicklin wanted to know the process followed to appoint DBSA.

EFF MP Mathapelo Siwisa said it was concerning Parliament lacked capacity to carry out project management as it relied on the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for everything.

Before George could answer the questions, ANC MP Xolisile Qayiso said George had previously explained the bank was preferred because of its track record and capacity to execute projects.

"I am not sure why it is causing knee jerks," Qayiso said.

George said Parliament had not established capacity to develop project management of infrastructure post-1994. "When you look at Parliament, it does not have capacity to manage projects let alone a project of this scale and magnitude," he said.

Initial assessments had showed that Parliament's restoration could take up to 42 or 48 months, but DBSA estimated it at 24 months.

George said DBSA had streamlined procurement processes and the requisite skill in infrastructure projects and project management.

National Assembly Speaker Nosivwe Mapisa-Nqakula dismissed perceptions Parliament had taken too long to get going on the restoration work.

The work for remodelling 90 Plein Street building is expected to be completed this month.

The removal of rubble in the damaged buildings will start in May and restoration will start in December, after procurement processes are completed.

Some opposition MPs asked why the restoration had taken so long.

Mapisa-Nqakula said a R2-billion budget for restoration was allocated in November. "No work could begin before the budget was done while negotiations were going on between ourselves, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure and National Treasury."