No.0421 - 2023: Fifth Session, Sixth Legislature

**GAUTENG PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE**

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS,**

**TABLINGS AND**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**========================**

Friday, 01 December 2023

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

none

# TABLINGS

none

COMMITTEE REPORTS

**1. The Chairperson of the Oversight Committee on the Premier’s Office and the Legislature (OCPOL), Hon. B W Dhlamini, tabled the Committee’s Focused Intervention Study (FIS) Report on Increased Economic Participation of People with Disabilities, as attached:**

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**OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON THE PREMIER’S OFFICE AND LEGISLATURE (OCPOL)**

*In line with the Oversight Model of the South African Legislative Sector “SOM”*

| **Committee Details** | | **Department Details** | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Committee** | OCPOL | **Name of Department** | OOP | |
| **Which Financial Year** | OCPOL FIS Report on Increased Economic Participation for PwDs |  | 1 | |
| **Which Quarter** | 4th Quarter 2023/24 FY |  |  | |
| **Committee Approvals** | | | | |
|  | **Name** | **Signed** | | **Date** |
| **Hon. Chairperson** | Hon BW Dhlamini |  | |  |
| **Adoption and Tabling** | | | | |
| **Date of Final Adoption by Committee** | | **Scheduled date of House Tabling/ATC** | | |
| Friday, 17th November 2023 | | Monday, 4 December 2023 | | |

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**Acronyms and Abbreviations**

App Application

BEE Black Economic Empowerment

CoJ City of Johannesburg

CSD Central Supplier Database

EXCO Executive Council

FIS Focused Intervention Study

FY Financial Year

GEP Gauteng Enterprise Propeller

GGT Growing Gauteng Together

GPG Gauteng Provincial Government

GPL Gauteng Provincial Legislature

IDC Industrial Development Corporation

KZN KwaZulu Natal

MTSF Medium Term Strategic Framework

NDP National Development Plan

OCPOL Oversight Committee on the Premier’s Office and the Legislature

OoP Office of the Premier

PIC Public Investment Corporation

POs Purchase Orders

PwDs People with Disabilities

SEDA Small Enterprise Development Agency

SEFA Small Enterprise Finance Agency

SBDs Small Business Developmet

SCM Supply Chain Management

SMS Senior Management Services

RFQs Request for Quotations

TISH Township, Informal Settlement and Hostels

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As part of the Committee mandate to oversee and hold the Office of the Premier accountable, the Focused Intervention Study (FIS) on Increased Economic Participation with People with Disabilities, was conducted based on the findings of the Annual Report of the Gauteng Office of the Premier for the 2021/22 FY.

The Preferential Procurement Spending target for People with Disabilities has been a challenge for the OoP to achieve in the past financial years. The Committee raised several concerns on this matter during the deliberations of the quarterly and annual performance reporting during this term of government administration. Despite the resolutions passed on this challenge, minimal improvement was made in reaching the set target. In the previous financial years, the Office of the Premier maintained that the reason for not meeting the targeted percentage on Preferential Procurement Spending for PwDs was due to limited number of companies owned by People with Disabilities being registered on the Central Supplier Database. These are mostly Small and Medium Enterprises which provide lower value services/ commodities. In certain instances, they lack access to capital to finance orders issued to them. While the Committee notes that PwDs may not be “choosing” to procure lower value commodities, that may not be of relevance to the OoP, they may need guidance to procure relevant goods and be empowered to compete fairly in the opportunities available within the procurement space.

The Committee, therefore reached an agreement to conduct a Focused Intervention Study (FIS) on Increased Economic Participation with Enterprises Owned by People with Disabilities to ascertain the root cause and to ensure the inclusion of this designated group in the mainstream economy. In getting to the root of this challenge, the Committee conducted a survey but could not yield positive outcomes due to limited responses received. The Committee saw it fit to further conduct a round-table discussions with PwD entrepreneurs to assess government’s minimal inclusion of this group in the mainstream economy through its preferential procurement processes.

The roundtable discussion was organized to explore strategies and initiatives to increase participation of this designated group in economic opportunities offered by the GPG. Through the roundtable discussions, the challenges raised included amongst others, the high costs required to participate in the tender process, which sparked the need for government to relax laws and procedures to ensure the involvement of this designated group. The Committee was inspired by the eagerness of the PwD community to grow their own businesses and contribute to the mainstream economy and not only rely on handouts but the slow movement of government in ensuring their inclusion demoralizes their aspirations.

The Committee roundtable has proved that there are PwDs in communities, who possess skills and capacities but only require support and guidance to grow and sustain their business. During the roundtable discussion, emphasis was placed on challenges that include amongst others, access to information, skills sharing and skills transfer. An indication was made that government should serve as a catalyst in uplifting and transforming the marginalized communities instead of taking full and endless responsibility. Capacitation and skills development of communities including the PwDs is crucial for empowerment and self-sufficiency to ensure business sustainability, to ensure expansion of their business to the private sector and to thrive when government is not able to assist. The PwDs entrepreneurs expressed their desire to grow their businesses to the level of self-sufficiency and non-reliance on government social grants which can be realized through start-up support from government. Therefore, there is a need for government partnership with PwDs for empowerment and capacitation.

The highlights of the Committee roundtable discussion included the need for government to establish regional offices to reach PwDs at the grassroots level instead of expecting them to travel to centralized provincial offices to be assisted. It was further noted that the establishment of PwDs helpdesks should be prioritized in government departments to ensure that this designated group receive the required assistance. Therefore, government must play a role in helping PwDs to access information through the establishment of PwDs helpdesks at provincial and local spheres of government. This initiative could assist government in achieving the targeted 7% Preferential Procurement target spending on PwDs and even set the target higher, going forward.

There is a need to create a PwDs Supplier Database Internet App (Application) that enables easy access of information, completion, and submission of procurement/tender documents for this designated group. Furthermore, the creation of disability platforms is crucial for PwDs to empower one another and provide advice to ensure transformation and development. The PwDs lamented about the bad treatment they suffer from government officials which leads to their non-participation in government programmes. The Committee is of the view that creating laws without the heart for implementation reflects a government that is not caring, and the disregard and bad treatment of PwDs by government officials should be monitored.

Creation of a fund for PwDs, to finance businesses and other crucial necessities such as ramps, to enhance their working environment should be taken into consideration. One participant highlighted the slow phase in the processing of service provider’s invoices at local government level and this could be resolved through the oversight monitoring function of GPL Committees in ensuring local government compliance in the payment of invoices within the stipulated timeframes. Furthermore, government must establish sound and secure online systems to verify RFQs forms and other relevant tender/procurement documents to protect service providers from falling victims of scammers and robbers. Corruption should be monitored and uprooted to ensure that PwDs are not forced to pay bribes before receiving assistance from government officials.

The Committee has expressed that this roundtable discussion should not be the first and the last interaction with PwDs, but to continuously interact with this designated group and assist them in building and sustaining their businesses. The focus should not only be on PwDs who have registered on the GPG Central Supplier Database but the search for this designated group should be expanded to include those who are not on government records to hear their views on how they can be assisted. The Committee highlighted that this designated group should be invited when the FIS Report on Increased Economic Participation of PwDs in Mainstream Economy is tabled in the House to be aware of the Committee commitment in ensuring that matters raised during the roundtable discussion have been taken forward for government consideration and implementation.

1. **Rationale**

# This case study on Preferential Procurement support for People with Disabilitiesemanates from *Programme 1: Administration. Sub programme: Financial Management.* This sub-programme supports the Office by ensuring efficient and effective financial management, supply chain management and risk management support.

The Committee undertook this focus intervention study to understand and assess the support that the Office is offering to this marginalized group to ensure that they can engage in economic opportunities with the OoP at the same level as able-bodied counterparts. Furthermore, Committee saw it fit to probe and investigate the reasons why People with Disabilities have registered their businesses but provide mostly lower-value services, as well as their low registration on the Central Supplier database.

Despite the resolutions passed to address this non-achievement, the Committee saw fit to ensure holistic solutions to improve performance on this set target. This Focused Intervention Study was aimed at investigating the main reasons for non-attainment of the targeted 7% procurement of Goods and Services from Businesses Owned by People with Disabilities to ensure economic inclusion of these groups. Specifically, the study intended to examine the extent to which businesses owned by people with disabilities can compete in the procurement space withing the Office of the Premier. In ascertaining the OoP’s challenge to meet the 7% Preferential Procurement for PwDs, a survey and a roundtable was conducted to get firsthand information from this designated group.

The objectives of this study were to assess the Office of the Premier’s support to businesses owned by People with Disabilities to ensure the achievement of the planned preferential procurement targets for this designated group. In addition, the Committee aimed to:

* To assess how the GPG can resolve challenges that block access to business opportunities for the sector.
* To assess reasons for low registration on the CSD by this group
* Assess reasons for supply of lower value services and commodities,
* To assess why the current mechanisms put in place by the Office are not yielding 100% desired results to attract this group in registering businesses on the database to allow inclusive access to economic opportunities.
* To assess the nature of support that the Office has in place for People with Disabilities.
* To understand what are the challenges that affect uptake of programmes that the Office has organized for People with Disabilities so far.

Government’s initiative to involve marginalised groups that include amongst others, Women, Youth and Persons to participate in empowerment opportunities is through the Preferential Procurement programmes. One of the main outcomes of Priority 2: Economic transformation and job creation is the Offices commitment to ensuring its effort on “Increased economic participation, ownership, access to resources, opportunities and wage equality for Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities”. The OoP’s challenge to meet the 7% Preferential Procurement target for PwDs, brought the need for the Committee to conduct this Focused Intervention Study to ascertain the obstacles behind this underachievement.

1. **BACKGROUND**

The 6th Administration took a decision to embark on a path towards realizing the Gauteng of our dreams “The Gauteng We All Want” by 2030. In working towards the realization of this objective, the Office adopted 7 organizational-level strategic outcomes to enable the organization to effectively focus and prioritize its options in delivering on its mandate and strategic intent. These organizational-level strategic outcomes are aligned to the seven priorities in the GGT2030 Plan. Issues of People with Disabilities are incapsulated in the NDP/MTSF: Priority 2: *Economic transformation and job creation*, GGT Priority 1: *Economy, jobs, and infrastructure* as well as Outcome 2: *A growing and inclusive economy, jobs, and infrastructure.*

During the consideration of the 2021/22 Annual Report, the OoP reported an achievement of 0.55% for *GPG Procurement Spend* on Businesses Owned by People with disabilities against a target of 7%, and a 4% achievement for *the Office of the Premier* against a target of 7%. This translated to a total spend on goods and services for the 4th quarter that amounted to R37.9 million. However, the OoP has not achieved this target since the beginning of the 2021/22FY. Furthermore, during the consideration of the OoP’s 3rd Quarter Report for the 2022/23FY, it was evident that more efforts are required in ensuring active participation of this designated group in the Preferential Procurement spending programme of both the Office and GPG, since under-performance of set targets were recorded during this period where 0.39 (GPG Wide) and 4% (Office of the Premier) was achieved. This has remained a concern for the Committee as it undermines the realization of an inclusive economy that ensures no one is left behind.

The COVID-19 pandemic weighed down government’s efforts of improving the Preferential Procurement targets and participation of marginalized groups including PwDs in the mainstream economy. The weight of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the collapse of many township businesses. This matter was also shared by the Office of the Premier in its Annual Report for the 2021/22FY. While this acknowledgement is true, it is even more dire, for People living with Disabilities trying to break ground in the space of Procurement for Gauteng Government.

However, the Committee concern for the inclusion of People with Disabilities in the mainstream economy through the OoP’s programme on Preferential procurement spending was reiterated throughout the 6th Administration as the OoP has not fully achieved this target. While the Office managed to achieve the targets for most of the marginalised groups, there has been glaring evidence that 7% Preferential Procurement targets for People with Disabilities has been difficult to achieve.

1. **Overview of presentation by the Office of the Premier**

The OoP highlighted that in line with Disability Equality Goals, the Gauteng Provincial Government’s emphasis is on elevating the voices of People with Disabilities across the sectors of society under the banner of #inclusion4equality. It is noted that theEmpowerment of Persons with Disabilities in South Africa has ensured capacity building in terms of Skills, knowledge, and confidence to assert their rights; making their own choices; full participation in society; creating a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone can reach their full potential. Furthermore, this initiative aims to address barriers to ensure radical transformation of disability rights as well as political, social, and economic empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.

1. GPG and GGT2030 vision includes Persons with Disabilities to ensure their effective contribution to economic, social, cultural, and political life with the full enjoyment of human rights together with able-bodied persons. It is noted that 2015, the Cabinet approved the White Paper on Disability Rights and its Implementation Matrix and EXCO approved Gauteng Disability Rights Policy 2020-25 as part of the inclusion of this designated group.

**4.1 Increased Economic Opportunities**

The preferential procurement targets are expressed as percentages of the total procurement spend against the amount spent with each targeted group and the target for Businessowners with Disabilities is set at 7%. However, Persons with Disabilities are severely affected by lack access to economic opportunities that Persons with Disabilities which is exacerbated by the Gauteng dwindling economy that is further undermining the attempts to transform the economic inclusivity of this targeted group.

**4.2 Central Supplier Database**

It is noted that 4543 entrepreneurs with disability have registered on the CSD system nationally and in Gauteng, 2485 businesses have registered on CSD. The regional percentage breakdown of companies owned by Persons with Disabilities on the CSD includes Johannesburg at 896; Ekurhuleni at 478; Tshwane at 754; West Rand at 204 and Sedibeng at 153.

The Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, No.5 of 2000 determines that Persons with disabilities should have 51% ownership to meet the criteria set. CSD system also reflects the minority owned business of Persons with Disabilities which negatively influences the accuracy of reporting and sourcing of service providers who meet the criteria. The highest number of companies registered on the CSD per service in the province includes food and beverage service activities at 327; construction of buildings at 314; other personal service activities at 191 and accommodation at 181. The OoP reported that out of all the companies owned by Persons with Disabilities in the province, 90% have an annual turn-over of less than R10 million; 26 companies (1%) that have an annual turn-over of R50 million or more; 224 companies (9%) who have an annual turn-over of more than R10 million and less than R50 million.

Central Supplier Database (CSD) is a system implemented by GPG to centralize and streamline supplier registration and procurement processes. CSD platform is not designed or optimized for accessibility, making it difficult for Persons with Disabilities to navigate and use the system. Persons with visual or cognitive impairments face challenges related to digital literacy and access to technology. The registration process on this system has complex requirements or documentation that pose difficulties for Persons with Disabilities. Challenges encountered includes obtaining or providing specific certifications, licenses, or financial documents, which can affect their eligibility and inclusion in the database.

The OoP highlighted that the GPG Economic Drive for PwDsincludes utilizing partnerships that include Standard Bank South Africa and Gauteng Enterprise Propeller to strengthen the impact of supplier development of Persons with Disabilities to provide supplier procurement opportunities and promote funding opportunities.

The OoP’s performance on Business-owners with Disabilities on Preferential Procurement spend for 2022/23 FY highlighted that in the 1st quarter of 2022/23 FY the GPG Departments’ total procurement spend of R9.2 million with Business-owners with Disabilities, reflecting 0,17% of the total GPG procurement spend against the targeted 7% threshold. The 2nd quarter of 2022/23 FY the GPG Departments’ total procurement spend was at R22.2 million with Business-owners with Disabilities, reflecting 0,39% of the total GPG procurement spend against the targeted 7%. In the 3rd quarter of 2022/23 FY GPG Departments’ total procurement of R90.6 million spend with Business-owners with Disabilities, reflecting 1,34% of the total GPG procurement spend. The 4th quarter of 2022/23 FY GPG Departments’ total procurement of R19.3 million spend with Business-owners with Disabilities, reflecting 0,32 % of the total GPG procurement spend**.**

In the 2022/23 FY, the total amount spend on business owned by Persons with Disabilities was at R141.3 million which is 0.55%of the total procurement spent in the province. The Departments of Road and Transport and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development achieved the set target in the 3rd quarter of the 2022/23 FY at 10,58% and 9,37% respectively.

The OoP highlighted thatfunding remains one of the key obstacles for companies owned by People with Disabilities to participate in the mainstream economy. Other challenges that prohibits this designated group to participate in the Preferential Procurement spending in the OoP and the GPG includes, lack of RFQ’s to companies owned by Persons with Disabilities on the CSD; lack of free Supplier and Enterprise development training restricting empowerment and growth of Entrepreneur with Disabilities; lack of focus on the top ten high-value sectors by township suppliers & Entrepreneur with Disabilities; lack of sub-contracting opportunities for Entrepreneur with Disabilities as well as buyers’ reluctance of utilizing business owned by People with Disabilities.

Intervention measures put in place includes support for township Entrepreneur with Disabilities and improve their quality of life by moving 100% free supplier training into the townships; GPG SAP Supplier Database daily interface with the Central Supplier Database (CSD) provides the most current supplier information to ensure that township suppliers are easily identified by buyers in departments; participation in the war-room on transformative procurement, which is constituted of experts in areas such as finance, economic development, and supply chain management. This war-room and other pertinent structures have conceptualised and to some extent implemented several preferential procurement strategies to aid the province to achieve the set target of 7 % procurement spend on Persons with Disabilities enterprises.

The GPG is encouraging township suppliers to register for P-Card, especially in the struggling South and West corridors; the identification and incorporation of the ten high-growth sectors into training for township suppliers, particularly in local production; setting aside commodities for procurement from firms that are based in the townships, in line with the Preferential Procurement Policy (if amended). Planned supplier development workshops per corridor, focusing on access to markets with partners for People with Disabilities Business Charter; to support township suppliers to participate in public and private procurement opportunities.

1. **findings oN the survey conducted**

In ascertaining the number years registered on the CSD, 4% out of the 20 entrepreneurs who participated in the survey, have been registered on CSD for less than 4 years. 100% of respondents indicated they had never done any business with the Office of the Premier. Businesses indicated their capabilities in providing services to the Office of the Premier, but no RFQs responded to or received. The participants highlighted challenges that include the selective nature of SCM practitioners,lack of awareness from the Office on the type of services they provide, corruption, lack of information on where to receive or find bids/tenders from the Office and high minimum requirements geared towards large players are the reason for low response to RFQs even though these businesses are registered on CSD.

5.1In probing the barriers experience by businesses owned by people with disabilities with submitting RFQs or responding to bids advertised by the Office of the Premier: The respondents highlighted the need to be treated as businesses first before being seen as People with Disabilities; lack of opportunities to gain the necessary experience to compete in this space; corruption; generic approach to services; poor planning and foresight as most RFQs are received within a short notice; documents (SBDs) from the Office and most GPG departments are in PDF which means a person must have access to printing facilities before filling the required information. A simple Word document would assist as there would not be a need to print.

5.2In ascertaining the challenges that affect uptake of programmes that the Office has organized for People with disabilities so far: 100% of respondents mentioned that they had never been invited to any workshop or information-sharing session by the OoP.

5.3 In terms of the recommendation on interventions to ensure the ability to respond to RFQs or submit bids on opportunities advertised by the Office: The respondents’ indicated the importance ofan open tender system and all the companies (owned by PwDs) bidding will know who will be participating and each person’s bidding price get to be revealed on closing day, so the process is open and fair; check on quarterly on the number of companies assisted; the Committee ‘s oversight duty should ensure that enough business is given to empower businesses owned and managed by People living with Disabilities; “Access to data and improved connectivity; make sure that all companies who qualify for any RFQ are invited to the bidding process and are given the opportunity to participate; “a specific method of emailing Pwds RFQ should be developed instead of being emailed to an individual; the introduction of an eProcurement tools like Coupa that allows for submission of pricing and proposals online; government bids should be easily accessible and known where to access them; the disability sector businesses should be made aware (sensitized) on regular basis about the changing procurement environment to encourage them to be active and participate in the province's economic development. Some services could be designated for qualifying disability sector businesses; give workshops on how to complete forms to meet requirements and train on how to calculate the cost; the CSD has been in place for 7 years and few months and not a single RFQ received, clearly the system has picked their own panel and there’s nothing wrong because once an institution picks you and you respond and deliver timeously and effectively you will be highly recommended. Other suppliers will be in vain and unbothered in some cases; access to the opportunities must be made available in general, in a hybrid format: physical and electronic; transparency is required.

1. **Overview of the Roundtable Discussions with PwD Entrepreneurs**

**Boipelo Lekoane: Managing Director of Moff Creations, Garankuwa, Orchards -Pretoria North**

Government does not understand disability and is not making efforts to understand it. She was the only person in the meeting with albinism and she questioned OCPOL’s efforts to reach other disability associations during the preparation of this event. The issue of lacking understanding of disability issues included lack of signage when entering the ANEW Hotel, Parktonian Hotel which caused challenges in navigating to the venue.

She owns a business which was costly to register and has participated in the tender system. Entering the procurement/tender space requires a person to attend briefing sessions which requires transport costs, downloading tender documents on the internet; sourcing of quotations, purchasing of supplies from different suppliers to render the service when awarded a tender; printing of CSD document, tax-exemption certificates bank statements, profile, BEE, POs of the previous job, and the challenge is all these documents have expiry date. This implies that every time a tender is advertised, new documents which required printing costs. The assumption was that the tender system is easy due to level of credibility that it holds. Due to the socio-economic challenges that this designated group is faced with and compounded by the different levels of disabilities, these barriers are sometimes difficult to navigate when guidance and support is not provided.

The challenge faced by PwD entrepreneurs is the existence of several supplier databases that other government departments such as Transport and Labour possesses and use separately which requires entrepreneurs to register on all these databases which is costly and time consuming instead of utilizing one Central Supplier Database (CSD). Furthermore, Tshwane and Gauteng Central Supplier Databases all have different vendor numbers. The tender system also requires a supplier to own a shop/ supply system which is costly. Government needs to establish tradeoffs to meet PwD entrepreneurs halfway to ensure their participation in the procurement system. Her company was registered in 2015 but has stopped participating in the tender process because the process is costly.

**6.1 Dipuo Makhathini**

To ensure tangible inclusion of people with different disabilities when conducting a survey study, it is advisable to hire a research company to dispatch fieldworkers on the ground to try and locate this designated group. There are many people with different disabilities and the on-line survey is limiting, utilizing the email system might is not user-friendly to some of the disabled people as they can’t see, so different methods of contacting disabled people is necessary. Due to bad economic conditions of the country, some people don’t even have money to buy data and would not even be able to access their emails. Utilizing fieldworkers to go to communities to physically contact the PwDs might be one of the platforms that can yield positive outcome in contacting PwDs.

**6.2 Khululekani Mhlongo – Tshwane Region**

His company was registered in 2017, to this date, he has never been awarded a tender and if he is not awarded a tender, he will not be able to gain experience. Other challenging factors prohibiting huge turnout in the participation of the tender system is due to many imposters/scammers on the internet sending out RFQs on behalf of government departments and there is no system of verifying the validity of the RFQs from scammers and they become victims of these scams. In the tender space, experience is a prerequisite. The Red Tape in the tender system is another stumbling block that prohibits people from participating. The desire to respond to tenders is high but lack of resources to participate in the is another challenge. To respond to an RFQ, a participant is required to have access to internet, printers, transport costs. Government must find a way of addressing these challenges to enable PwDs to participate in the tender system.

**6.3 Samantha Makhubela: Gauteng**

She is a stubborn entrepreneur who had travelled all the country to make sure that her business thrives. Accountability being the first pillar of NSP, the trend is to disregard individual shortcomings and quick to see the need to hold government accountable. There is need to take accountability for self, push self out of a sludge/frame of living with disability and stop accepting the inability labels; doing things for self and become resilient in pursuit of own goals. The progress is of getting out of the sludge is slow because PwDs stay hidden and there is a need to explore and not feel sorry for self. Disability and impairment are diverse issues. There is physical impairment, intellectual impairment, blindness, deafness (hard of hearing), etc. Getting a tender is not easy even for an able-bodied person, let alone a person with disability. She urged/ implored the Committee to also accelerate issues of mental transformation forward to ensure the removal of stigmas that PwDs’ lacks the ability to provide certain services.

Access to funding is not easy and even for an able-bodied person. In term of access to information, the Braille systems is scarcely utilized except on paper money and if a person has an intellectual disability, this become a ripple effect because if a person is dyslexic, there is no room to learn, no space to be trained, and therefore lacks skills required to participate in the mainstream economy. PwDs are concentrated in the low-income space, due to lack of interest from private sector to fund them. However, there are initiatives such as Vulindlela that people do not know about that can assist them to access funding. There is a need for government to publicize and ensure awareness of these initiatives to the Pwd community.

Lack of legible support for PwDs is highly experienced and there is a need for sensitive advisers to assist. She has moved to the private sector due to the lack of interest of advisers to help PwDs understand the procurement/ tender space. The advisers in the public sector do not want to communicate, do not want to share their skills or transfer skills, train and empower others. PwDs should be guided instead of discrimination against each other. This brings lack of confidence to PwDs because impairments are not the same and they should not be treated the same.

Research survey should be conducted by a qualified researcher, to undertake field work for data collection from PwDs. Government should enforce legislated quotas for PwDs as similarly implemented for BEE. Awareness about CSD should be publicized through mainstream channels such as radios, television, social media, internet, etc. Care-Centre should be established to work towards transformation, to guide and incubate in the educational space on procurement issues. She implored entrepreneurs to take charge of the change that they want to see and find ways to empower each other.

**6.4 Nathasha Masike: Ekurhuleni Springs**

**Reagile Community Development – Broad Charity Organization**

Woolworths and a Portugues company are assisting her in distributing food parcels to families, and in taking people who are struggling with substance abuse and drug addiction to rehabilitation centers. Utilizing personal finances to assist in running half of the duties that are meant to be discharged by government is a challenge. Financial resource to buy airtime, data is the main challenge. In addition, the agricultural land she applied for was redirected to another person.

**6.5 Lubabalo Mbeki – consultant and work with other disability organizations**

The contributing factors for low turn-over in response to the research survey conducted by OCPOL can be attributed to lack of data and airtime, amongst others. The cost implication of doing business with government is high and relaxed conditions particularly gate keeping procurement conditions for PwDs should be taken into consideration. This is a digital era and printing paper is expensive, therefore online submissions of tender documents should be prioritized. Other GPG departments have adopted online submissions and those that are left behind should be encouraged to follow suite. Treasury should be alerted on the online scams with PwDs being the most vulnerable and therefore, sound, and secure online submission should be put in place to protect entrepreneurs from scammers. He was scammed on the money that he borrowed in the 1st year of running a business. Using a memory stick to submit tender documents to government departments is still costly since spending on transport will not be avoided. Government should strive for effective communication and feedback considering that PwD is an interest group that has prioritized for assistance. Feedback that is clear and precise is not provided to PwDs entrepreneurs which would improve understanding of the tender process. Since feedback is not provided to PwD entrepreneurs when they do not receive tender/s they automatically assume their products were overpriced.

**6.6 Johane Blose: CEO of Viacom**

He is from the deaf community. Procurement with government is frustrating, there is a huge misunderstanding between innovation and government services. When identifying services, as an innovator, he approaches a potential user of services mainly government departments to discuss innovation in terms of the needs required by communities. Procurement and legislation do not allow government to get proposal for services from users, which defeats the importance of societal needs. This creates a disjuncture between the societal needs and services that government provides. Government expects PwDs to provide catering services and is unwilling to embrace innovative ideas that deaf community is initiating and is reluctant to procure such services which result in the non-achievement of the 7% target. Government needs to understand general business services and innovation and come on board to understand the innovation that would cater for the deaf community. Other PwD entrepreneurs have come on board to innovate and cater for the needs of deaf community, but government is not eager to be involved in such partnership. Deaf entrepreneurs assess and prioritize services that thrives in communities to make profit.

**6.7 Lettie Mashilo from Bronhorspruit – Blind person**

She is working with children and older persons. Due to lack of financial resources, registering a company is a challenge as well as participating in the tender process. She has been taken from pillar to post to register for land for business purposes and has given up. She ended up running her business from her residential site to operate a crèche. She is using her disability grant to run her company and due to lack of funding, small businesses are collapsing. Acquiring a Health certificate for compliance requires a lot of money and cannot venture into crèche business without it. She also stopped participating in the tender process due to lack of money for necessities such as data, airtime, printing, etc. Hopefully the attendance of this event will improve government’s assistance to the PwD community.

**6.8 Mama Busi Mkize from AMATEO Trading PTY, Limited**

She is a woman living with multiple disabilities that are visible and invisible, one of which is bipolar and people with this disability are very intelligent but are not given opportunities due stigmas and stereotypes in communities. However, she is capable and is currently a facilitator, moderator, and assessor. The PwD community should empower themselves by identifying the skills they need and those that they possess before, asking for assistance from government. So, empowerment sessions of PwDs are important to share entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, skills transference and even form cooperatives. It is also crucial for government to address mental barriers and psychological notions and assumption about the PwD community. PwDs are looked as an addition to the population and are treated as a liability and this notion of dependency that people have about PwDs needs to be corrected.

**6.9 Nthabi Mahlangu, Soshanguve South**

She was diagnosed with polio at the age of 5 and her left arm is paralyzed. She used to run a tuck-shop and food (hospitality) business. Government is encouraging them to register businesses with the promise to assist with funding and mentoring. After conducting training/s, businesses are not awarded. Tax returns are continuously being completed and banking fees paid but tenders are not awarded. Their conviction is that government gathers this designated group to solicit information to develop and submit their reports. PwDs believe that they are being marginalized, therefore, they have stopped responding to government calls as they have been countlessly being disappointed. Most of the PwDs want to live independently from government grants and all they need is a guiding hand for identification of opportunities; business planning, feasibility, testing; funding and mentorship.

**6.10 Sibusiso Mbatha Kwakuhle Staffing Solutions**

He has been living with disability since the age of three, and it is not the easiest way of living as confidence is majorly tested. The way government was decisive in taking major effort to regulate and enforce BEE in recognition of Black People and the same should apply to PwDs. Despite being faced with many challenges, PwDs have taken a decision not to stand at street corners to beg but have taken courage to own and manage their own businesses. PwDs have experienced huge disappointment from government and honest support is required for this designated group and not what is currently been done.

**6.11 Moshe Mnisi**

He was shot by a policeman while in a highjacked car. He does not believe that PwDs are receiving support from government, even if it is what is been said because there is nothing much to show. Currently, government’s key priority is the support for women and youth more than PwDs, which is an unfair advantage. Within country’s population, there are men and women who are awarded tenders in comparison to Persons with Disabilities, who put ten times more effort to achieve every task. His experience in the tender system, was that of being categorized and with able-bodied counterparts. Living with disability is very expensive when compared with able-bodied persons in terms of executing their activities which is more the reason for government to support People with Disabilities. When entering the procurement space, a person is required to attend briefings, a person using a wheelchair requires a special car and assistance and cannot use a normal taxi or bus. Able-bodied people will not be able to exercise patience which already poses inconveniences. It is important for government to categorized PwDs separately instead of addressing societal issues according to racial categories. PwDs should addressed differently and not be expected to compete with able-bodied people in the tendering processes because living with disability is extremely expensive and the reality is anyone can become disabled in a moment. The hope is for the politicians at this meeting to table concerns of PwDs for serious consideration by government. This roundtable discussions could even reach parliament because legislation is required to protect People with Disabilities. Government should consider separate tenders specifically for PwDs which will assist in the achievement of the 7% target. A reasonable number of PwDs employees in the government departments can assist in changing the mindset of officials about what disability is all about. This roundtable initiative is impressive particularly coming from government.

**6.12 Kishor Huddie KKI promotional, sports clothing, branding, embroidery, screen printing**

He is working in the space of corporate clothing. He has been running his business for 23 years and has done business with government for 15-18years. At the beginning, he used to get lots of business from government, but eventually the RFQs started dwindling. When he inquired from departments for not being awarded jobs, he was told that someone provided cheaper prices. Being aware of the cost implications to render such a service; it becomes obvious that the job has been given to friends/relatives of the officials. He approached SEFA, GEP, SEDA, for funding and it took SEFA 2 years to respond, and the answer was unsuccessful. GEP provided some of the funding, SEDA never responded. Government is currently offering less prices for tenders. He attended several government workshops, SANPARK being one of the organizers and at such workshops, people’s issues were not taken seriously but the main activity was the provision of tea and lunch. Officials do not even bother to take contact details of participants. He has done the work for COJ, and it took them 3 months to pay, and the bank stop orders bounced due to lack of funds. He used to employ over 40 people but now he only 22 employees.

**6.13 Mr. A Mathebula, Garankuwa,**

The government slogan says ‘nothing about us without us’ but he is not sure whether the slogan is a true reflection of what government is implementing or just recitation. PwDs should be represented by people who have an understanding and the passion to transform and empower them. He is using a cane, but when he goes to a hospital, they do not have canes to provide. He had to buy one for about R800 -R1000.00. He has been involved in the recycling business since 2017 and has employed 3 people. He manages the work by himself, with R2500 rental costs for a container and there is no funding to sustain his business. Government comes to his business site only to take photos and leave. When he goes to SEDA to register a business, he is questioned about the motive for opening a business while he is receiving, a grant, and is told to go home. There is no PwD helpdesk or representative at SEDA and in government departments, PwD representation is around 2%. If his business is thriving, he can become independent from the SASSA grant. Since government has a BEE policy; therefore, there is a need to establish one to support PwDs.

**6.14 Sibonakele Fani Mbola, Malibongwe Enterprise Property Limited from Hamanskraal**

He registered a company in 2021 and is in possession of Vendor Numbers for Tshwane and Gauteng and has only received 1 RFQ from Tshwane. He is visually impaired and uses taxis as a mode of transport and he can maneuver his way around Pretoria. Government once called him to attend a training at 154 Main Street opposite Calton Centre and is not familiar with Johannesburg CBD; walking alone in this area might attract scammers and robbers. Since Gauteng has 2 big cities, government should consider conducting trainings in both cities to meet participants halfway. Furthermore, he inquired with Tshwane on the reasons for not receiving RFQs from them and was told that they will call him but invain.

**6.15 Mapule Moloto, Vaal**

She has built a good relationship with the Gauteng Legislature for several years, but now she is experiencing a dry financial season. She is asking for a business opportunity once again. She is requesting government to give PwDs opportunities even the option to supply groceries. She is not only involved in catering, but she is also a motivational speaker. Government should put systems in place to ensure that Supply Chain Management considers PwDs when issuing tenders and this will enable government to meet the set targets.

**6.16 Sifiso Chartered Accountant**

Budgets are getting tighter and tighter, and businesses are struggling. Most government tenders are targeting women and youth and have done a good job in in this area, but less support has been provided to PwDs as few tenders have been dedicated them. He has engaged departments to provide audit services but was offered a tender to supply stationery. Putting policies in place to support PwDs is a good measure/strategy, but the implementation of policy action plans is not considered because government officials do not take People with Disabilities seriously. PwDs are just managed and brushed off to disappear. He was once enrolled to a 3-month training for financial skills by one of the government departments, but the service provider’s level of skill was too low to provide the required capacity and empowerment which was a waste of time. Furthermore, after completion of the 3months training, they were made to sign contracts on enterprise development which were about to expire in 2 months, and were told to disregard the expiry date, but eventually the procurement manager told them that the contract had expired. When it comes to funding, organizations such as PIC, IDC amongst others prioritize youth and women and PwDs are viewed as irrelevant. The solution of addressing PwD involvement in the procurement space is to set aside funds and tenders for this designated group; develop an App where PwDs business owners can register their services and for government to source services that this designated provides. He also proposed the development of an App to KZN government departments. The plight is for government not to categorize PwDs as irrelevant and be taken seriously and not as 3rd class citizens.

**7.CONCERN/S/ FINDING/S**

**7.1 Committee Concerns/Findings.**

The Committee is concerned:

**7.1.1** Government’s lack of efforts to fully understand disability matters and how to empower and capacitate PwDs.

**7.1.2 Costly** and time consuming Pwd entrepreneurs’ registration to several supplier databases that other government departments (such as Transport and Labour) possess and use separately from the Central Supplier Database (CSD).

**7.1.3** Many imposters/scammers on the internet sending out RFQs on behalf of government departments without a verification system/s, leads to PwD entrepreneurs falling victims of scams.

7.1.4 Lack of government efforts to regulate and enforce PwDs’ economic empowerment initiatives identical to BEE regulations.

7.1.5 Lack of support for People with Disabilities in minimising travel distance and costs implications to attend training workshops, submission of tender documents and to access information about government services.

7.1.6 The unavailability of disability desks in municipalities and provincial government departments to assist PwDs to access relevant information relating to processes and procedures to business funding, procurement, and tender documents.

* + 1. Issues relating to the Red Tape and corrupt practices of soliciting bribes from PwDs which blocks the speedy registration of companies, submission of tender and procurement documents.
    2. Government’s treatment of People with Disability in the same manner as able-bodied persons.
  1. **Committee Recommendations**

Based on the information set out herein-above as well as the Committee Concerns, the Committee therefore recommends that the Premier of the Gauteng Province should respond to the followingby Wednesday, 31 January 2024.

The Premier should:

7.2.1 Provide measures put in place to ensure full understanding of disability matters including corrective measures in place to address and implement capacitation and empowerment issues for this designated group.

**7.2.2 Provide mechanisms in place to regulate the utilization of** Central Supplier Database (CSD) by all spheres of government departments. Corrective measures to phase out other supplier databases by some of the government departments should be provided.

**7.2.3 Provide remedial action in place to address** internet imposters/scammers sending out fake RFQs on behalf of government departments and putting verification system/s to ensure that PwDs do not fall victims of such scams.

7.2.4 **Provide** strategies in place to ensure government regulation and enforcement of PwDs’ economic empowerment initiatives identical to BEE regulations to support the business ventures of this designated group.

7.2.5 Provide mechanism put in place to decentralize government training centers for PwDs and for easy access of information by ensuring the establishment district and regional centers to minimize travel costs.

7.2.6 Provide measures put in place for the establishment of disability desks in municipalities and provincial government departments to assist PwDs to access relevant information for business funding, procurement, and tender documents.

7.2.7 Provide mechanisms put in place to unblock issues relating to the Red Tape and corrupt practices of soliciting bribes from PwDs hampering the speedy registration of companies, submission of tender and procurement documents.

* + 1. Provide measures put in place to solely developed strategies to ensure the inclusion and participation of PwDs in the tender and procurement of the OoP and GPG instead of government’s expectation that they operate similarly to able-bodied persons. The report should include government’s initiatives of developing a PwDs Supplier Database Internet App (Application) for registration and sourcing their services instead of categorizing them in the same pool as able-bodied persons.

1. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# **9.** **ADOPTION**

In accordance with Rule [164] of the Standing Rules of the GPL, the Committee hereby presents the report to the House for adoption.