



EFF STATEMENT ON PHYSICAL MEETINGS OF PARLIAMENT SITTINGS AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Tuesday, 2nd July 2024.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) demands an end to virtual parliamentary participation and call for the immediate resumption of physical sittings for all sessions and committee meetings.

The introduction of virtual platforms for the business of Parliament during the COVID-19 pandemic was sensible and practical, as physical meetings were prohibited. Despite many limitations and interruptions, we participated in the sittings through virtual platforms due to the unavoidable circumstances of the pandemic.

However, Parliament has continued with a hybrid model of sittings since the burning of Parliament in January 2022. The EFF has consistently called on Parliament to put measures in place to ensure maximum participation of all members. This should include committee meeting rooms that are spacious enough for all Members of Parliament and halls for Assembly and Council sittings.

The EFF maintains that virtual parliamentary participation undermines the work of Parliament, and the failure by Parliament administration to make necessary arrangements is cause for concern. Virtual participation presents several challenges as many Members of Parliament (MPs) living in remote rural areas face significant difficulties due to poor network connectivity, which hampers their ability to participate effectively.

Additionally, virtual sittings are often disrupted by technical issues, including connectivity problems and system crashes, leading to interruptions and delays. The IT infrastructure supporting virtual sittings has shown to be inadequate, resulting in

frequent technical difficulties that disrupt proceedings. The virtual voting system also lacks transparency, raising concerns about the integrity and accuracy of voting outcomes. Furthermore, the logistics of coordinating virtual sittings are complex and have led to inefficiencies and confusion, further impeding the smooth operation of parliamentary duties.

The EFF has made submissions for Parliament to consider affordable and practical venues, such as the New Way Community Hall in Khayelitsha, and many other available options besides expensive hotels. We, once again, demand an end to virtual parliamentary participation and call for the immediate resumption of physical sittings.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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