



STATE *of the* **NATION**
— ADDRESS —

HIGHLIGHTS – 2026

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A **NATION** 
THAT **WORKS** 
FOR ALL



His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered the State of the Nation Address (SoNA) to a joint sitting of the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces held at the Cape Town City Hall on Thursday, 12 February 2026.

Positive economic growth and investment

Government has achieved two consecutive primary budget surpluses. South Africa's credit rating has improved, interest rates are coming down and inflation is at its lowest level in 20 years.

Government is on a clear path to stabilising national debt. The Rand has strengthened against the Dollar. Borrowing costs have declined. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange, the largest stock exchange on the African continent, has performed well over the past year. This growth reflects broader economic recovery, investor confidence and

increasing interest in South African equities.

Over three years, government is committing more than **R1 trillion in public investment to build** and maintain infrastructure. This is the largest allocation of its kind in South Africa's history.





Through the Infrastructure Fund and new regulations for public-private partnerships, government will use innovative funding models, reducing risk and attracting investors to fast-track projects in energy, water, transport and digital infrastructure.

Government has launched the first-ever infrastructure bond to raise funding for the infrastructure drive, which was over-subscribed more than twice.

State Property Company

In 2026, government will establish a professional State Property Company to transform the 88 000 buildings and five million hectares of land owned by the State into professionally managed engines of growth and development.

Critical minerals and industrial development

The Industrial Development Corporation has announced more than **R300 million** in funding for the Frontier Rare Earths Project in the Northern Cape. This has the potential to become one of the world's largest and lowest cost new producers of minerals that are needed for smartphones, lithium batteries and other products.



New gold, copper, rare earths, platinum and coal mines are being opened.

At the G20 Leaders' Summit in November last year, the G20 countries supported South Africa's proposal to expand local beneficiation of critical minerals and the export of finished products.

Over the course of the first five South Africa Investment Conferences, the country was able to raise **R1.5 trillion** in investment commitments. To date, over **R600 billion** has flowed into projects; with new factories, mines and other facilities being opened each year.

Creating employment

Government's most urgent task is to rebuild the economy by creating work and livelihood opportunities on a large scale through public and social employment programmes.

This year, government will introduce regulatory changes that will make it much easier



for businesses to participate in the Youth Employment Service programme and create jobs for young people.

Government will also expand public employment programmes, including the Community Workers Programme, Expanded Public Works Programme and the Presidential Employment Stimulus to strengthen coordination between income support, skills development and pathways into longer-term

work, particularly for young people and women.

To promote inclusion, government will **increase employment equity targets of persons with disabilities in the Public Service to 7% by 2030**, and mandate a 7% preferential procurement target across all government and public entities.

10 000 new extension officers will be deployed to support farmers and improve agricultural productivity,

creating opportunities for youth employment in the agricultural sector.

Expanding affordable housing

Government is introducing a new model that shifts from building housing to giving subsidies for ownership and rental in areas that are suitable. Subsidies will support people to build, buy or rent their own housing.

Economic reforms

Through Operation Vulindlela, government has made significant progress in accelerating economic reform and opening the way for investment and competition.

Government has brought an end to loadshedding and built a more dynamic and resilient energy system.

Progress has been made in improving the performance of ports and freight rail lines, steadily increasing the volume of





promote long-term growth.

Trade, industrialisation and international partnerships

In a world where countries are looking to diversify their supply chains, government will increase exports across the globe, strengthen capacity for trade negotiations and expand missions abroad to drive economic diplomacy.

“We are determined to compete in a rapidly changing global economy and strengthen our capacity for trade negotiations, expanding our missions abroad to drive economic diplomacy.”

– President Cyril Ramaphosa.

goods moving in and out of our country.

Government has restored the passenger rail system, more commuters are now able to travel to work on new locally-made trains – significantly reducing their transport costs.

Government continues to invest in the country’s roads, bridges, rail lines, ports, dams, wind and solar farms to

South Africa’s Trade Policy is aimed at promoting sustainable development, growth and strengthening international partnerships. The country has a diverse

economy, high-quality manufacturing facilities and strong regulatory frameworks.

Amid the turmoil in the global economy, **government is supporting established industries** in the face of strong headwinds. Government plans to revive the ferrochrome industry to protect jobs in the steel, automotive and other sectors which employ thousands of South Africans; while collaborating with businesses and workers to close loopholes in tariff structures and develop additional measures to protect and grow the manufacturing base.

Through these interventions, government can create millions of quality jobs in sectors such as agriculture, mining, services and the green economy.

Through the Blended Finance Scheme, working with the Land Bank and commercial banks, government has provided **R7.8 billion in innovative funding** to black producers.

The agricultural sector is expanding rapidly. South Africa is the second largest exporter of citrus fruit in the world, opening new markets for exports from citrus and avocados to maize, livestock, grapes and wine.



Investing in small and medium businesses

“If every small and medium business in South Africa could employ one additional person, we would create three million new jobs; however, many of these businesses, a number of which are owned by women and young people, cannot get funding to start or to grow.”

– President Cyril Ramaphosa.

To support young people struggling to find markets for their goods and services, government will adopt public comments on the draft Business Licensing Bill to ensure that the final Bill makes it easier to start and run a small business in South Africa.



Addressing the foot-and-mouth disease crisis

Government has classified foot-and-mouth disease as a National Disaster and will mobilise all necessary capabilities within the state to deal with the outbreak. Vaccination of 14 million cattle of the national herd will be facilitated by government and will **require 28 million vaccines over the next 12 months.** The central acquisition of the vaccines will ensure that the right vaccine is secured for the



particular strain of the virus in South Africa.

Eliminating the disaster will include working closely with the private sector to enable efficient rollout and most importantly, ensure that commercial, private and communal farmers have immediate access to vaccines.

A task team made up of farmer organisations and experts, working together with the Minister of Agriculture and his department, will provide monthly reports to the President.

Intensifying the fight against crime

A stronger South Africa must be safe and secure.

Government is prioritising the fight against organised crime and criminal syndicates using technology, consolidating intelligence at national level, identifying priority syndicates and deploying hand-picked, multi-disciplinary intervention teams focused on dismantling criminal networks.

At the same time, an integrated strategy to address the root causes of crime through coordinated action across society, from street lighting to access to social services will be implemented.

To fight gun crime, government will streamline legislation and regulations on licensing, possessing and trading in firearms and



ammunition. Enforcement of existing gun laws will be increased.

This year, **5 500 additional police officers** will be recruited, adding to the 20 000 new officers that were announced in previous SoNAs. The officers will address the threat posed by infiltration of illegal and counterfeit goods to South African jobs and industry.

Government is establishing a National Illicit Economy Disruption Programme to align key state agencies and other stakeholders, including the private sector. Through effective use of data analytics and Artificial Intelligence, the State will target high-risk sectors such as tobacco, fuel, alcohol and other counterfeit products.

The Madlanga Commission of Inquiry has exposed rampant corruption in the South African Police Service (SAPS) and some Metro Police departments through abuse



of power. The State Security Agency will re-vet the Senior Management of the SAPS and Metro Police.

Dealing with the water crisis

To ensure water security in the long term, government is building new dams and upgrading existing infrastructure; committing to more than **R156 billion** in public funding for water and sanitation infrastructure over the next three years.



The construction of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and other large-scale projects such as the Ntabelanga Dam, part of the Mzimvubu Water Project in the Eastern Cape, is advancing and government is in the final stages of establishing a National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency to effectively manage and mobilise funding for the country's water infrastructure.

The Water Services Amendment Bill will enable government to hold water service providers accountable for their performance and withdraw their licences if they fail to deliver. Additionally, those who neglect their responsibility of supplying

water to communities will be held to account. Government has already laid criminal charges against 56 municipalities that have failed to meet their obligations. Charges will be laid against Municipal Managers in their personal capacity for violating the National Water Act of 1998.

To address the challenge in line with the commitment made last year, a new **R54 billion** incentive for metros has been introduced to reform their water, sanitation and electricity services. This will ensure that revenue from water usage is put straight back into fixing pipes, reservoirs and pumping stations.



Deployment of the SANDF to crime hotspots

South Africa has requested the United Nations (UN) to allow for the withdrawal of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) troops from the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The President is deploying the SANDF to support the police to deal with gang violence and illegal mining. The President has directed the Ministers of Police and Defence to develop a tactical plan to deploy security

forces within the next few days in the Western Cape and Gauteng. As is required by the Constitution, the President will inform the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces regarding the timing, location and cost for the deployment of soldiers.

South African soldiers have participated in peacekeeping missions in many parts of the African continent since the advent of democracy, and will continue supporting conflict prevention and peacekeeping efforts of the UN, African Union and the Southern

African Development Community.

GBVF classified as a National Disaster

In 2025, South Africa classified gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) as a national disaster. This classification will enable government to better coordinate response and direct efforts towards the most impactful interventions. Building on the National Strategic Plan on GBVF, all sectors of society will be empowered through communication and social mobilisation to challenge harmful attitudes and practices. Government will continue promoting women's economic empowerment through training, financial

support and preferential procurement.

“We will strengthen law enforcement through faster investigation, improved case management, expanded sexual offences courts and action against repeat offenders. We will scale up survivor-centered support, ensuring access to shelters, one-stop service centres, mobile and rural outreach and the placement of Social Workers in police stations.”

– **President Cyril Ramaphosa.**



Early childhood development

Government will intensify efforts to fix the Basic Education system, with a focus on early learning, literacy, numeracy and mother-tongue-based bilingual education.

Government is expanding access to early childhood development (ECD) through the *Bana Pele* mass registration of ECD facilities and an increase in subsidies for ECD learners. By making Grade R compulsory, government will ensure that all children get off to a good start.

Working towards building a healthy nation

Government will be undertaking substantial investment in health infrastructure, prioritising the construction and revitalisation of academic hospitals as part of preparations for the National Health Insurance. The Department of Health (DoH)



will be investing in health facilities, personnel and systems to improve access to quality care. Starting with George Mukhari Hospital, the DoH will work with various public and private financing institutions to finance the building and revitalisation of healthcare facilities.

In support of programmes to prevent and ultimately eliminate the Human

Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), government will undertake a massive rollout of Lenacapavir, a six-monthly injection that has proven highly effective in **preventing HIV transmission**; while also working to end cervical cancer in South Africa by mobilising society to ensure that every young girl between the ages of nine and 15 years receives the HPV vaccine.

Highest Matric pass rate in South Africa's history

Government congratulates the Matric Class of 2025, which achieved an 88% pass rate.

This is the highest pass rate in the country's history, reflecting both the commitment of learners and the interventions made by government to improve learning and teaching in schools.

Going forward, government must address the high dropout rate in the last few years of schooling. More



learners must be able to write Matric and select subjects such as maths and science, that will enable them to progress further.

Higher education and training opportunities

To absorb the increasing number of young people passing Matric, government will expand opportunities for young people to enter institutions of higher learning. President Ramaphosa has directed the Ministers of Finance and Higher Education to work on a proposal to build more universities and Technical and Vocational Education

and Training Colleges with specialised areas of focus.



An immediate problem is the great shortage of student accommodation at institutions of higher learning. The Minister of Higher Education will address this challenge, working with financial institutions on innovative ways in which government can provide student accommodation.

Continuation of the Social Relief of Distress Grant

As a transformative instrument to improve the

lives of the poorest and most vulnerable the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant will be continued. Since it was introduced during COVID-19, the grant has kept millions of South Africans out of food poverty. This year, government will re-design the grant to support livelihoods, skills development, work opportunities and productive activity more effectively.

Eliminating corruption in the Public Service

“To build a stronger South Africa, we need an ethical, capable, and developmental State. This requires committed and honest public servants with the right skills and a deep culture of service. Over the past year, we have passed significant new legislation to professionalise the Public Service.” –

President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The Public Service Amendment Bill will protect key appointments from political interference and ensure that capable and qualified people are appointed to senior positions based on their suitability for the job.

Lifestyle audits have been made mandatory for senior public servants, reaching 93% compliance across departments last year. There will be a central registry for disciplinary cases across all spheres of government. This will prevent people who are facing or have undergone disciplinary action from being employed elsewhere in the State.

Centralised model for managing SOEs

To improve the governance and performance of state-owned enterprises, government will implement clear standards for appointments to ensure that the leaders of these

entities have appropriate qualifications and experience.

Government will adopt a phased approach to a centralised model for managing the State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) portfolio to set standards, strengthen governance and ensure financial sustainability. This includes finalising the National State Enterprises Bill.

Illegal immigration

Government will prioritise funding to strengthen border security, covering





infrastructure, technology and people. Key border posts will be re-developed through public-private partnerships and will extend the Electronic Travel Authorisation to all international airports and the busiest land ports of entry.

The Border Management Authority is already using drones and technology to greater effect along all borderlines. Government will ensure that employers that hire foreign nationals without the required visas face the full might of the law. To tighten enforcement, government will hire an additional **10 000 labour inspectors** this year. The SAPS, Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and labour inspectors will work together

to crack down on violations of existing immigration, labour and other laws.

Leveraging digital transformation for growth

Government will harness digital transformation as a driver of growth, inclusion and effective service delivery. This year, the DHA will launch a digital ID to enable safe and secure use of digital services for all South Africans. Driver's licenses, Matric certificates and services at the Master's Office will be digitised. Citizens will be able to fill out police statements online and eligibility for South African Social Security Agency grants

can be tested remotely. All these services will be made available on the *MyMzansi* platform. Soon, every South African will be able to access many of the services they need without visiting a government office or filling out manual forms.

This year alone, hundreds more bank branches will now offer Smart ID and passport services, decreasing queues and waiting times. Government will work with civil society to ensure that citizen's protections and rights are safeguarded through this digital revolution.

National Dialogue to continue

The National Dialogue process will spread across South Africa in 2026; reaching every community, school, university, college and society. Under the guidance of the Eminent Persons Group, consisting of prominent and respected South Africans and led by an inclusive Steering Committee, the public dialogues will give citizens the opportunity to raise their concerns, aspirations and plans for the future. This will culminate in a National Convention where all of these conversations will be brought together to outline the



actions that all citizens must take to build a better country. The conversations will guide the formulation of an overarching national compact and of the next phase of the National Development Plan beyond 2030.

International cooperation

In a world where powerful nations often assert their dominance and influence over less powerful states, South Africa's commitment



to sovereignty and self-determination is sacrosanct. It is not negotiable.

“We will stand firm on our sovereignty and promote our national interests, values and the rights of our people. We are clear that we will continue to respect the rights and sovereignty of other nations, but we must be equally clear that we will not be bullied by any other country.”

– President Cyril Ramaphosa

South Africa will forge strong partnerships with like-minded countries to increase shared resilience to global disruptions, continue to champion multilateralism and strengthen humanitarian diplomacy. The country remains a clear and consistent voice for international law, justice and human rights.

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