

## State of the Nation Address by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 12 February 2026

Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Thoko Didiza,  
Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane,  
Deputy President Shipokosa Paulus Mashatile,  
Chief Justice Mandisa Maya and Judges President,  
Former President Thabo Mbeki,  
Former President Kgalema Motlanthe,  
Former Deputy President David Mabuza,  
Former Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Baleka Mbete,  
Former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Lechesa Tseleni,  
Former Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Amos Masondo,  
Mayor of the City of Cape Town, Mr Geordin Hill-Lewis,  
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Regional Deans and Heads of Missions  
Members of Parliament,  
Fellow South Africans,

We gather here as our country is mourning the tragic and devastating loss of 14 South African soldiers who were part of a mission to bring peace to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We bow our heads in tribute to:

Staff Sergeant William Eddie Cola  
Staff Sergeant Molahlehi Ishmael Molahlehi  
Staff Sergeant Shwahlane Theophilus Seepe  
Corporal Matome Justice Malesa  
Corporal Rinae Nemavhulani  
Lance Bombardier Itumeleng Macdonald Moreo  
Lance Corporal Tseke Moffat Molapo  
Lance Corporal Metse Stansly Raswisiwi  
Rifleman Sebatane Richard Chokoe  
Rifleman Derrick Maluleke  
Rifleman Tshidiso Andries Mabele  
Rifleman Calvin Louis Moagi  
Rifleman Mokete Joseph Mobe  
Private Peter Jacobus Strydom

Alongside soldiers from other Southern African countries, they lost their lives in defence of the fundamental right of the Congolese people to live in peace and security.

They lost their lives not in the pursuit of resources or territory or power.

They lost their lives so that the guns on our continent may be forever silenced.

We salute our gallant soldiers.

My Fellow South Africans,

This State of the Nation Address is taking place as we celebrate 70 years since the adoption of the Freedom Charter at the Congress of the People in Kliptown.

The Freedom Charter is the cornerstone of our democratic Constitution.

It sets out a vision of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

It sets out a vision of a country in which government is founded on the will of the people,

where the land is shared among those who work it,

where the people share in the country's wealth,

and all are equal before the law.

It is this vision that continues to guide us as we work to build the nation we all want.

It is the spirit of the Congress of the People that inspires us as we prepare for a National Dialogue in which South Africans are once again called upon to chart a new path for our country.

We must chart this path in a world that is rapidly changing.

It is a world of both interdependence and competition, of cooperation and conflict.

It is a multipolar world in which new countries are emerging to play a greater role in global affairs.

We are seeing intensifying competition over trade, technology and influence in global institutions.

There are global fundamental shifts underway that affect every aspect of human life.

From the growing impact of climate change to rapid advances in artificial intelligence, geopolitical tensions and violent conflicts.

In the face of these challenges, we are witnessing the rise of nationalism and protectionism, the pursuit of narrow interests and the decline of common cause.

This is the world that we, as a developing economy, must now navigate.

But we are not daunted. We will not be deterred.

We are a resilient people. We will not be bullied.

We will stand together as a united nation.

We will speak with one voice in defence of our national interest, our sovereignty and our constitutional democracy.

By staying true to our values, by harnessing our unique strengths and endowments, and by forging a common purpose, we can turn these trying circumstances to our advantage and propel our country forward.

As South Africans, we stand for peace and justice, for equality and solidarity.

We stand for non-racialism and democracy, for tolerance and compassion.

We stand for equal rights for women, for persons with disability and for members of the LGBTQI+ community.

We stand for our shared humanity, not for the survival of the fittest.

So, this evening, let us speak of the nation we want.

And let us speak of the work we must do – and the work we are doing – to build that nation.

We want a nation united in its diversity.

At many difficult moments in our past, we worked together towards a common goal.

Through partnership, we brought peace and democracy to our country.

We overcame apartheid, a crime against humanity that denied people their human rights, that deprived them of their land and livelihoods, that sought to strip them of their dignity.

Through partnership, we overcame a devastating pandemic and rebuilt our country in the wake of state capture.

Together, we have built durable institutions that support our democracy, protect our fundamental rights and promote the well-being of South Africans.

We have built meaningful partnerships between government and business, labour, civil society and other social partners to drive growth and development.

These stand as models of cooperation for the rest of the world.

South Africans are continuing to work together to confront our country's challenges and build a nation that works for all.

Guided by the wishes of the people as expressed in last year's elections, we have formed a Government of National Unity to give expression to our culture of cooperation.

As political parties, we have set aside our differences and agreed to work together for the good of all South Africans.

In the last week, we have adopted the Medium Term Development Plan, which sets out a clear and ambitious programme for the next five years.

The actions contained in the Medium Term Development Plan will advance our three strategic priorities:

Firstly, to drive inclusive growth and job creation.

Secondly, to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living.

Thirdly, to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Our most urgent task is to grow our economy so that we can create jobs, reduce poverty and improve the lives of all South Africans.

To undertake this task, we need a government that works for the people.

We need a state that is capable and competent, underpinned by a professional public service.

South Africans want a state that treats all people with dignity, humility and respect.

A state with leaders who are prepared to serve our people with complete dedication, and public servants who are ethical, skilled and properly qualified.

To achieve these objectives we are strengthening the role of the Public Service Commission in the appointment of the key people who direct the affairs of our state such as Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, Chief Executive Officers of SOEs and board members and other senior positions.

We will introduce a graduate recruitment scheme so that we may attract the best and the brightest into the public service.

A capable state must start where people live and work.

In many cities and towns across the country, roads are not maintained, water and electricity supply is often disrupted, refuse is not collected and sewage runs in the streets.

In part this has happened because many municipalities lack the technical skills and resources required to meet people's needs.

Many municipalities have not reinvested the revenue they earn from these services into the upkeep of infrastructure.

Starting this year, we will work with our municipalities to establish professionally managed, ring-fenced utilities for water and electricity services to ensure that there is adequate investment and maintenance.

Many of the challenges in municipalities arise from the design of our local government system.

We will therefore undertake extensive consultation to develop an updated White Paper on Local Government to outline a modern and fit-for-purpose local government system.

We will review the funding model for municipalities as many of them do not have a viable and sustainable revenue base.

We will continue to work with traditional leaders in the implementation of local development programmes.

We will expand our support to municipalities that require assistance, drawing on the lessons of the Presidential eThekwini Working Group.

We are seeing great progress in eThekwini as we implement the district development model, which enables all key role players as in government, business, labour and community-based organisations to work together.

As we work to reform the public service and build the capability of the state, we will harness technology to transform the way that government works.

We will invest in digital public infrastructure to give South Africans access to government services anytime, anywhere, through a relaunched gov.za platform.

At the heart of this transformation will be the implementation of a digital identity system.

These measures will transform the relationship between citizens and government, and create one government that is accessible to every person at a touch.

We want a nation with a thriving economy that benefits all.

To create this virtuous cycle of investment, growth and jobs, we must lift economic growth to above three percent.

To achieve higher levels of economic growth we are undertaking massive investment in new infrastructure while upgrading and maintaining the infrastructure we have.

We are developing innovative ways of funding infrastructure.

We are engaging local and international financial institutions and investors to unlock R 100 billion in infrastructure financing.

A project preparation bid window has been launched to fast track investment readiness.

This includes revised regulations for public private partnerships, which will unlock private sector expertise and funds.

Government will spend more than R940 billion on infrastructure over the next three years.

This includes R375 billion in spending by state owned companies.

This funding will revitalise our roads and bridges, build dams and waterways, modernise our ports and airports and power our economy.

Through the Infrastructure Fund, twelve blended finance projects worth nearly R38 billion have been approved in the last year.

These are projects in water and sanitation, student accommodation, transport, health and energy.

Construction of the Mtentu Bridge construction continues.

This bridge will rise above the river between Port Edward and Lusikisiki, and will become the tallest bridge in Africa.

The Polihlali Dam will feed 490 million cubic metres of water a year from the Lesotho Highlands into the Vaal River System, securing water supply to several provinces for years to come.

Working with international partners, we are revitalising small harbours, unlocking economic opportunities for coastal communities.

We are steadily removing the obstacles to meaningful and faster growth.

The economic reforms that we are implementing through Operation Vulindlela have created a new sense of optimism and confidence in our economy.

We have made progress in rebuilding and restructuring a number of our network industries.

We are seeing positive results in the improvement of the functioning of our network industries as well as the investment opportunities that are opening up and are being taken by investors leading to job creation.

Working together with business, labour and other social partners we must now finish this work.

Over the coming year, we will initiate a second wave of reform to unleash more rapid and inclusive growth.

Our immediate focus is to enable Eskom, Transnet and other state-owned enterprises that are vital to our economy to function optimally.

We are repositioning these entities to provide world-class infrastructure while enabling competition in operations, whether in electricity generation, freight rail or port terminals.

We continue with the fundamental reform of our state owned enterprises to ensure that they can effectively fulfil their social and economic mandates.

This includes the work underway to put in place a new model to strengthen governance and oversight of public entities.

We will ensure public ownership of strategic infrastructure for public benefit while finding innovative ways to attract private investment to improve services and ensure public revenue can be focused on the provision of public services.

We are in the process of establishing a dedicated SOE Reform Unit to coordinate this work.

The measures we have implemented through the Energy Action Plan have reduced the severity and frequency of load shedding, with more than 300 days without load shedding since March 2024.

While the return of load shedding for two days last week was a reminder that our energy supply is still constrained, we remain on a positive trajectory.

We now need to put the risk of load shedding behind us once and for all by completing the reform of our energy system to ensure long-term energy security.

The Electricity Regulation Amendment Act, which came into effect on the 1st of January, marks the beginning of a new era.

This year, we will put in place the building blocks of a competitive electricity market.

Over time, this will allow multiple electricity generation entities to emerge and compete.

We will mobilise private sector investment in our transmission network to connect more renewable energy to the grid.

As we reform our energy system, we are continuing to build successful multilateral partnerships in the global effort to halt the devastating impact of climate change.

Our Just Energy Transition is gaining momentum.

Over 13 billion US dollars have been pledged by the international community and significant private capital is being invested locally.

We are determined to meet our carbon reduction commitments, and will do so at a pace and scale that our country can afford.

We are revitalising our port terminals and rail corridors through the Freight Logistics Roadmap, leveraging private capital to restore them to world class standards.

Transnet's performance has stabilised and is steadily improving.

We released a Network Statement in December 2024 which, for the first time, will enable private rail operators to access the freight rail system.

Open access to the rail network will allow train operating companies to increase the volume of goods transported by rail, while our network infrastructure remains state owned.

This will ensure that South African minerals, vehicles and agricultural produce reach international markets, securing jobs and earning much needed revenue for our fiscus.

New cranes and other port equipment are being commissioned to speed up the loading and unloading of cargo and reduce waiting times for ships in our ports.

As we forge ahead with the reform agenda, an urgent priority is to ensure a secure and reliable supply of water across the country.

Many people in our cities, towns and villages are experiencing more and more frequent water shortages as a result of failing water infrastructure.

It is impossible to live without water and it is impossible for the economy to grow without water.

We are therefore taking a series of decisive actions to resolve the water crisis, to enable our people to get water where they live, whether in townships or rural areas.

We are investing heavily in expanding our water resources.

To date, the Infrastructure Fund has secured R23 billion for seven large water infrastructure projects.

We have ended delays in major water infrastructure projects like Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and the uMkhomazi Dam.

Work is underway to prepare for construction of the Ntabelanga Dam on the uMzimvubu River to supply additional water for domestic use and for irrigation in the Eastern Cape.

Within the next year, we will complete the establishment of the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency to unlock much greater investment in water projects.

Through the Water Services Amendment Bill, we will introduce a licensing system for water service providers and remove licenses where providers do not meet the standards for quality drinking water.

As part of our reform agenda, we will continue to enhance our visa system to make it easier for skilled people to invest in our country and to grow tourism.

This year, we will launch an Electronic Travel Authorisation system to enable a secure, fully digital visa application process.

This system will use artificial intelligence and automation to reduce the scope for corruption and enable rapid turnaround times for tourist visas.

We have cleared over 90 percent of the backlog of more than 300,000 visa applications.

These changes send a strong message that South Africa is open for business and tourism.

We want a nation in which prosperity and opportunity is shared by all.

For many decades our economy has been held back by the exclusion of the vast majority of the South African people.

Black South Africans were deprived of land, of capital, of skills, of opportunities.

Our economy was starved of the potential of its people.

And that is why we need to transform our economy and make it more inclusive.

That is why our focus is on empowering black people, women and persons with disabilities because they were deliberately excluded from playing a key role in the economy of their own country.

We will set up a transformation fund worth R20 billion a year over the next five years to fund black-owned and small business enterprises.

We will fast-track the regulations of the Public Procurement Act to ensure businesses owned by women, youth and persons with disabilities receive equitable opportunities in government contracts.

We will continue to provide training to women entrepreneurs to enable them to compete for government tenders.

In November last year, we launched the National Skills Fund Disabilities Programme.

In its first phase, this transformative initiative will empower over 10,000 persons with disabilities through tailored training programmes, stipends and specialised tools.

This part of the work we must undertake as business, government, labour and civil society to enable persons with disabilities to play an important part in the economy of our country.

Through these programmes, we are not only righting a grave historical wrong.

We are unleashing the potential of our economy for sustained growth.

We want a nation where there is work for all.

Where every person can earn a decent living and realise their potential.

Where the rights of workers are protected and working conditions improved.

Where women and men receive equal pay for work of equal value.

We need to ensure that growth creates jobs for all, especially for young people.

The success of the Presidential Employment Stimulus shows how public employment programmes can create meaningful work that generates a wider benefit and contributes to sustainable employment.

The employment stimulus has created almost 2.2 million work and livelihood opportunities through innovative models that provide high-quality work to participants.

The Social Employment Fund has created over 80,000 jobs this year.

It has supported more than 12,000 participants to enter entrepreneurial activities.

During the past year, young people secured 235,000 work opportunities through the National Pathway Management Network, which is underpinned by the SAYouth.mobi platform.

We now need to build on these innovative programmes to create jobs for youth at even greater scale.

To create jobs, we must leverage our unique strengths and our unrealised potential to build the industries of the future – green manufacturing, renewable energy, electric vehicles and the digital economy.

This year, we will finalise a modernised and comprehensive industrial policy that drives economic growth.

We will achieve this ambition by focusing on the opportunities in localisation, diversification, digitisation and decarbonisation.

We are working towards the full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which will tear down the barriers to trade on our continent.

As the most industrialised economy in Africa, we are positioning ourselves to be at the centre of this new and growing market.

We are harnessing the sun and the wind to make our country a leader in renewable energy and green manufacturing.

With an abundance of cheap, green energy, we can produce products that are competitive anywhere in the world and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs in the process.

We are making sustainable use of the rich abundance of the South African earth.

By supporting our farmers, improving our logistics network and rural supply chains, and opening new export markets for products we can significantly expand our agricultural sector.

We want South Africa to be leading in the commercial production of hemp and cannabis.

We are breathing new life into the mining industry, which remains one of our most important and valuable endowments.

We are on track to implement a new, modern and transparent mining rights system this year, which will unlock investment in exploration and production.

We will put in place an enabling policy and regulatory framework for critical minerals.

By beneficiating these minerals here in South Africa, we can make use of the extraordinary wealth that lies beneath our soil for the benefit of our people.

Even more valuable than our natural resources are the diversity, energy and talent of the South African people.

The services sector is now the largest part of our economy, ranging from financial services to retail, hospitality, tourism and the burgeoning creative industry.

The tourism sector is growing rapidly, with close to 9 million tourists having visited our country last year.

We will grow tourism through our visa reforms, through increasing the number of flights to key destinations, and through marketing South Africa as the best country in the world to visit.

We have also seen strong growth in digital services and business process outsourcing, which has created jobs for young people.

To support this growth, we are investing in skills development for the industries of the future.

The Jobs Boost fund has pioneered a new model that links funding for skills in demand to the successful placement and employment of young people.

We are expanding our support for small and medium enterprises and for the informal economy, which sustains millions of jobs and livelihoods across our country.

This includes streamlining funding for small businesses, unlocking venture capital for high-growth start-ups, and developing a regulatory environment that enables rather than restricts informal enterprises.

To build an innovative economy, the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation will establish an Innovation Fund to provide venture capital to tech start-ups that emerge from our higher education institutions.

We are calling on business to use the SA Youth.mobi platform, which has some 4.5 million young people registered, for their hiring.

We are calling on business to support the Youth Employment Service and to scale-up workplace experience opportunities over the coming year.

We want a nation where no one goes hungry.

For 30 years, since the dawn of democracy, we have worked together to reduce poverty.

Today, we spend around 60 percent of our national budget on the social wage: on health, education, social protection, community development and public employment programmes.

More than 28 million unemployed and vulnerable people receive social grants.

More than 10.5 million learners go to public schools where they do not have to pay fees.

Last year, over 900,000 students from poor and working class backgrounds received funding to study at universities and colleges.

Through these programmes, we are alleviating the worst effects of poverty.

We are providing the means through which South Africans can rise above the poverty that has been passed down from one generation to the next.

But we have to do much more if we are to end poverty.

We must do much more to ensure that women in particular no longer face a hopeless struggle to feed and clothe their children.

While government invests heavily to support poor and unemployed people, these programmes are fragmented and sometimes difficult to access.

We are therefore building an integrated system of support for poor and unemployed people.

We are strengthening existing programmes from job search support to public employment and making sure that together they provide people with pathways out of poverty.

Rather than expecting those in need to approach several government agencies separately, a citizen should be able to go to one place to receive all of the support that they need.

To protect the gains that we have made since 1994 in advancing children's rights, we will soon adopt the National Strategy to Accelerate Action for Children, which focuses on ten key priorities including poverty reduction, child protection and addressing malnutrition.

The Social Relief of Distress Grant is as an essential mechanism for alleviating extreme poverty.

We will use this grant as a basis for the introduction of a sustainable form of income support for unemployed people.

Central to our efforts to end poverty and to develop our economy is to provide decent, quality education to every young South African.

We are immensely proud of the achievements of the matric class of 2024, which achieved the highest past rate in our country's history.

Eighty-seven percent of learners who sat for their matric exams passed.

For the first time in the history of our country, nearly half of these learners achieved a bachelor pass.

Nothing can diminish our pride in the hard work of these learners and the steady support of their teachers, parents and broader community.

Our immediate focus is to expand access to early childhood development for every child.

This will be achieved through registering and formalising existing ECD centres and ensuring that they have the facilities, training and material that they need to provide quality early learning.

We will focus on ensuring that every child can read for meaning in the foundation phase to set them up for success in later years.

To achieve this, we are implementing mother tongue based bilingual education to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, and rolling out lesson plans, reading books and other interventions that have been proven to work.

The Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme will continue to prioritise students who want to pursue a teaching career in the Foundation Phase.

Last year, we signed the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, which is pivotal for ensuring that education is accessible and inclusive for all South Africans.

This year, the Minister of Basic Education will introduce national policy, norms and standards and regulations to empower all partners in basic education to support the implementation of the Act.

To ensure that the economy has the skills it needs, we are increasing the production of artisans through TVET colleges.

This is part of the shift we are undertaking towards education and skills development that combines formal learning with job training.

Drawing on the models that have proved so successful in other countries, we call on the private sector to offer young people experiential learning opportunities while they undertake their studies.

We are implementing Phase 1 of the comprehensive student funding model for higher education to address the needs of the "missing middle".

This will support approximately 10,000 students in the first year.

We want a nation in which there is quality health care for all.

This year, we will proceed with the preparatory work for the establishment of the NHI.

This includes developing the first phase of a single electronic health record, preparatory work to establish Ministerial Advisory Committees on health technologies and health care benefits, and an accreditation framework for health service providers.

The NHI will reduce inequalities in healthcare by ensuring everyone gets fair treatment.

The NHI will save many lives by providing a package of services that include, for example, maternal and newborn care and services for people living with HIV, those with TB, and those suffering from non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

Our most immediate priority is to strengthen the health system and improve the quality of care.

A vital part of this is the modernisation, improvement and maintenance of existing health facilities and construction of new hospitals and clinics.

A number of hospitals are under construction or undergoing revitalisation.

These include the Limpopo Central Hospital and the Siloam District Hospital in Limpopo, the Dihlabeng Regional Hospital in Free State, the Bambisana District Hospital and Zithulele District Hospital in Eastern Cape, and the Bophelong Psychiatric Hospital in North West.

Other projects are at various stages of design and development. This includes the replacement of three existing old central hospitals, three new central hospitals, five new district hospitals, five community health centres and a new psychiatric hospital.

To improve patient experience, we are putting more emphasis on reducing waiting times, cleanliness and staff attitudes in public health facilities.

We are encouraged by the great progress the country has made towards ending HIV and AIDS as a public health threat.

By the end of March 2024, 96 percent of people living with HIV knew their status, 79 percent of these were on antiretroviral treatment and 94 percent of those on treatment were virally suppressed.

To ensure that we reach our target of 95-95-95, we will this year launch a massive campaign to look for an additional 1.1 million people who are not on treatment.

We are concerned about the potential impact of the decision by the United States government to suspend some of its funding for HIV and TB programmes in African countries for 90 days.

This funding accounts for about 17 percent of our country's HIV spend. We have been able to provide funding from our fiscus for our HIV and TB programmes over the years.

We are looking at various interventions to address the immediate needs and ensure the continuity of essential services.

To tackle inequality, we need to undo apartheid spatial planning, which has scarred our cities and forced many people to live far from areas of work and opportunity.

We have delivered millions of housing opportunities since 1994, providing safety and dignity to poor households.

Yet the practice of building housing developments on the periphery of urban centres has perpetuated inequality and urban sprawl.

Going forward, we are going to build more housing in our city centres and closer to work and business opportunities.

We are redesigning our housing subsidies and directing more funding towards programmes that enable people to buy or rent a home in an area of their choice.

We will release more underutilised state properties for affordable housing development.

We are working with provinces and metros to reclaim buildings that have been hijacked in the city centres and repurpose them for public use.

We will provide 300,000 serviced stands to qualifying beneficiaries to enable housing development in well-planned, connected communities along key development corridors.

We will clear the backlog of title deeds for subsidised housing, turning homes into household assets.

We will review land use, building and other regulations to enable low-cost property development, including backyard housing.

This represents a fundamental rethink of how the state delivers housing at scale while turning our cities into engines of growth and opportunity.

In making our cities work for their residents, we will restore the remaining passenger rail corridors and stations to full service.

More than 80 percent of passenger rail corridors have been returned to service.

Prasa has introduced over 200 modern, locally-produced trains on its network to provide a low-cost option for public transport.

Over the next five years we will restore Prasa's signalling system so that we can put all our new trains to work and commuters can be assured they can reach work safely, affordably and on time.

We want a nation in which everyone is safe.

The police continue to work with other law enforcement agencies to dismantle organised crime syndicates and combat financial and violent crimes.

The SAPS has partnered with the metropolitan municipalities and is working with communities to fight crime in the priority provinces where crime is particularly high.

We are intensifying Operation Shanel, which has been successful in arresting suspects, recovering firearms and seizing stolen vehicles.

We must tackle the scourge of gun violence that has plagued our society for decades.

I have asked the Minister and the National Commissioner of Police to prioritise reducing gun-related crime and violence.

This includes preventing the diversion of firearms into the illicit market and recovering illegal firearms in circulation.

We know from international evidence and our own experience that this is the most effective way to reduce overall violent crime.

The Detective Service, which is crucial to solving cases, will be expanded by 4,000 personnel through internal recruitment processes.

We are working on adopting surveillance, analytics and smart policing solutions for modern law enforcement.

We have seen the value of technology in fighting crime.

By using AI in its fraud risk detection and verification work, SARS has prevented the leakage of over R95 billion in impermissible refunds, recovered R20 billion in revenue and dismantled an illicit tobacco and gold scheme.

We continue to work across society to end the violence that is perpetrated against women.

We have promulgated the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Act, establishing a national structure to oversee a coordinated response to this crisis.

We will ensure that the Council is fully functional and properly resourced.

We continue to strengthen support to victims of gender-based violence.

There are now 65 Thuthuzela Care Centres across the country.

Out of 52 districts in the country, 44 have GBV shelters.

All police stations in the country have victim friendly services, and another 16 sexual offences courts will be established in the next financial year.

We want a nation that is free of corruption.

Last year, we established the Investigating Directorate Against Corruption as a permanent entity within the NPA dedicated to investigating and prosecuting high-level corruption cases.

We will ensure that the Directorate is fully resourced and has access to the information that it needs to prosecute state capture cases and hold those responsible to account.

We are establishing a world-class digital forensics lab to support the investigation of complex corruption and financial crime with cutting edge tools and expertise.

We are making steady progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the State Capture Commission, including signing into law several legislative reforms.

The Special Investigating Unit and Asset Forfeiture Unit report that over R10 billion has been recovered in state capture related cases.

This year, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development will report on the review of the anti-corruption architecture by the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council.

This is expected to streamline legislation, eradicate the duplication of mandates and foster greater cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

We will finalise the whistleblower protection framework and introduce the Whistleblower Protections Bill in Parliament during this financial year.

This year, we will strengthen South Africa's system to combat money laundering and terror financing with further legislative and system improvements.

To secure our removal from the international Financial Action Task Force grey list, we have made significant progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in our law enforcement system, with 16 out of 22 action items fully addressed.

We want a nation that is at peace with the world.

We continue through our international relations to advance the well-being of the South African people as we seek to advance the well-being of humanity.

We will work to strengthen our trade relations around the world and to leverage our strong and diverse global alliances to make our economy more resilient.

The key pillars of our foreign policy remain the promotion of human rights, peace and friendship and the strengthening of fair trade and investment ties with other countries.

These are the principles that guide our Presidency of the G20 this year.

We have chosen the theme of solidarity, equality and sustainable development to underscore the need for cooperation and partnership among the countries of the world.

For the first time in its history, the G20 is being hosted on the African continent following the admission of the African Union as a member of the G20.

It is an opportunity to place the needs of Africa and the rest of the Global South more firmly on the international development agenda.

Our G20 Presidency is a valuable opportunity for South Africa to advance efforts towards greater global economic growth and sustainable development.

Africa remains at the centre of our foreign policy.

We continue to work to strengthen the African Union to support the achievement of peace, development and economic integration on the continent.

We know that our future prosperity is inextricably bound to the prosperity of the African continent.

For Africa to thrive, we must silence the guns on the continent.

Since the advent of democracy, we have been instrumental in restoring stability in countries like Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, South Sudan and Lesotho.

Most recently, we have been part of the SADC peacekeeping mission in Mozambique that has brought relative calm and stability to the Cabo Delgado province.

The presence of South African peacekeepers in the eastern DRC is testament to our continued commitment to the peaceful resolution of one of the world's most intractable conflicts, which has cost millions of lives and displaced millions of people.

We call on all parties to embrace the current diplomatic efforts to find a peaceful resolution, including honouring the Luanda Process.

We will attend the Joint Summit between SADC and the East African Community scheduled to take place in Tanzania this weekend, where we will reiterate our call for a ceasefire and a resumption of talks to find a just and enduring solution.

We have always believed that the freedom we won – and the international solidarity from which we benefited – imposes a duty on us to support the struggles of those who continue to experience colonialism and oppression.

South Africa continues to stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine, who, having endured decades of illegal occupation, are now experiencing indescribable suffering.

South Africa has acted in accordance with its obligations under the Genocide Convention by instituting proceedings against Israel at the International Court of Justice.

We are fully committed to the articles of the United Nations Charter, including the principle that all members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means.

We support the principle of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states and peoples.

We continue to participate in the different peace processes seeking to bring about a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

South African delegations have been instrumental in developing a framework for negotiations towards a just peace in Ukraine based on the UN Charter and international law.

South Africa continues to advance its agenda of cooperation and multilateralism through its membership of the United Nations, African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement and BRICS group of countries.

As humanity confronts unprecedented challenges, we are determined that a reformed and representative United Nations must be at the centre of global affairs.

We will continue to push for progress on the reform of the UN Security Council into a more inclusive, more effective body that is able to ensure peace and security.

The work we do and what we stand for needs to be explained to many key players, especially to our trading partners and the many countries and leaders we interact with on the global stage.

With a view to explaining the many positions that we have taken and in particular the objectives we wish to achieve during our Presidency of the G20, I have decided to send a delegation of government and other leaders to various capitals on our continent and across the world.

This delegation will interact with various key players on a variety of matters that affect South Africa's interests.

Fellow South Africans,

All of these things that we speak of are possible.

As South Africans, we know the power of cooperation, of what is possible when people of different backgrounds, races, cultures, languages, ethnic groups and religions come together behind a shared objective.

The formation of the Government of National Unity provides us with an opportunity to show once again what we can achieve by working together.

I call on all South Africans, united in our diversity, to come together in the National Dialogue to define a vision for our country for the next 30 years.

The National Dialogue must be a place where everyone has a voice.

It must be a place to find solutions that make a real difference in people's lives.

The National Dialogue must reaffirm that each and every one of us has a role to play in building the nation we want,

While we may differ on many issues, we agree on one thing: that we need to build a better South Africa and improve the wellbeing of our people.

And so, as we enter a new era in the world and in our own country, let us speak of the empathy and compassion that we have for one another.

Let us speak of the pride we have for our country and for all that we have achieved.

Let us speak of the determination that won us freedom and that drives us forward now to a better future.

With this determination, we will work together to make this an era of growth, progress and transformation.

We will work together to build the nation that we want.

We will work together to build a nation that works for all.

I thank you.