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# Political parties call for end to empty promises as Ramaphosa prepares state of the nation speech

Novus Media | 12 Feb 2026



President Cyril Ramaphosa will be addressing the nation tomorrow during the opening of parliament. What can we expect?

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Political parties and public organisations have outlined their priorities and expectations ahead of President Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address in Cape Town on Thursday.

With South Africa facing economic challenges, high unemployment and infrastructure failures, various stakeholders have called for concrete action rather than broad commitments.

## DA demands economic reforms

Western Cape Premier Alan Winde said national government has a responsibility to unlock the country's economic engines to drive recovery and secure investment.

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"South Africa cannot afford another year of policy uncertainty and slow reform. The President must be bold and unequivocal: growth and jobs must come first," Winde said.

The DA outlined several reforms it expects the president to announce, including reviewing and replacing Black Economic Empowerment policies, which it said deter foreign investment. The party called for immediate unlocking of ports and rail to private operator concessions, ending Transnet's monopoly.

Other DA demands include outlawing cadre deployment, devolving policing powers to competent governments, making accounting officers personally liable for spending that fails annual audits, and ring-fencing power and water revenue in local governments.

The party also called for the president to reverse backtracking on breaking Eskom's monopoly and warned against announcing what it described as job-killing programmes including the National Health Insurance and Transformation Fund.



President Cyril Ramaphosa will deliver the State of the Nation Address at the Cape Town City Hall on Thursday, with political parties and organisations calling for concrete action on economic growth, job creation, service delivery and anti-corruption measures.

## VF Plus calls for decisive leadership

VF Plus leader Dr Corné Mulder said the party wants to hear that South Africa's interests will be placed above those of the ANC within the context of a dramatically changing geopolitical world.

"President Ramaphosa must for once stand up and show he has the courage to make the right decisions, even if they are not in line with his own party's outdated ideological friendships from the past," Mulder said.

The party wants to hear what urgent interventions the Government of National Unity will implement to resolve the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, which has already caused enormous damage.

The VF Plus also called for the creation of a new, credible and corruption-free South African Police Service, restructured from bottom to top. Mulder said the party is tired of unachievable plans and empty promises whilst the current transport system and municipalities are collapsing.

## GOOD Party identifies four priorities

The GOOD Party outlined four major areas it wants addressed: education, economic growth and human rights, criminal justice, and housing.

Secretary-General Brett Herron said basic education reform is being held hostage by anti-transformation forces. He noted that whilst this year's matric pass rate was good, children from no-fee schools performed relatively worse than those at fee-paying schools.

On economic growth, the party called for a proper Basic Income Grant, noting that the current Social Relief of Distress Grant of R370 per month is hugely insufficient against the new official food poverty line of R855 per month.

The party wants the president to announce the appointment of a high-level panel to develop strategies to counter delays in the execution of justice and called for a new approach to housing that regards it as public and municipal infrastructure.

## IFP calls for measurable progress

The Inkatha Freedom Party said it expects a comprehensive and action-oriented address that outlines government's plans to advance good governance, strengthen service delivery, and drive inclusive economic development.

The party said the address must demonstrate measurable progress on last year's commitments, particularly in rural safety, infrastructure development and water security, with a clear implementation roadmap accompanied by firm timelines and measurable targets.

The IFP said it remains committed to balancing constructive governance with robust oversight whilst maintaining its distinct identity within the Government of National Unity.

## PSA demands end to austerity

The Public Servants Association, representing more than 245 000 public-sector employees, called for a decisive, honest and action-oriented address.

"The era of vague commitments must end as South Africa needs concrete action and measurable outcomes," the PSA said.

The association highlighted that official unemployment remains at 31,9% and youth unemployment exceeds 58%, whilst public debt is approaching 80% of GDP.

The PSA rejected ongoing austerity policies and called for inflation-plus wage increases. It noted that an average worker earning approximately R15 000 per month loses close to 25% of income through direct and indirect taxes.

The association called for the president to commit to full implementation of reforms in the Public Service Amendment Bill to professionalise the public service and eliminate political

interference. It also demanded urgent and full capacitation of the Border Management Authority.

The PSA expects the president to announce the date for 2026 local government elections to be held no later than 15 December 2026.

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## SALGA seeks implementation focus

The South African Local Government Association said it anticipates a decisive shift from commitments to implementation.

SALGA President Councillor Bheki Stofile said communities expect to see results from previous commitments made by the seventh administration.

"This year's address needs to go beyond diagnosis and deliver a clear roadmap for implementation, including funding commitment. Local government is ready to partner with national and provincial counterparts to turn policy into progress," Stofile said.

The association expects the president to reaffirm local government's central role in national development and demonstrate measurable progress on reforms announced in previous addresses, including professionalising local government and reviewing the local government funding model.

SALGA called for a more equitable and adequate fiscal framework, stating that enhancements in funding and revenue management are essential for municipalities to drive development in communities.

This year's State of the Nation Address will be delivered on Thursday, 12 February at 19:00 and proceedings will be broadcast from 17:00 onwards on SABC.

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