

MEDIA RELEASE	Opening of Parliament Address: PSA calls on President to address critical issues facing South Africa
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) as a major union representing public-sector employees is optimistic that South Africa is facing a new era and the Opening of Parliament Address (OPA) should serve as a pivotal platform for President Cyril Ramaphosa to articulate the administration's comprehensive plans and long-term vision.

The PSA urges the President to address critical issues such as economic growth, job creation, eradication of fraud and corruption, and improvement of infrastructure at public-service institutions. The statement of intent, which led to the establishment of the Government of National Unity must be outlined to forge plans and goals of the new administrations. The President's address must bring hope and confidence to citizens and encourage them to work together, irrespective of political affiliations and cultural backgrounds. There should be an emphasis that government programmes will address historic challenges such as poverty, inequality, and unemployment. There should be an inclusive economy that creates jobs and offers opportunities, especially the youth.

Government must learn from the challenges and experiences of the past 30 years of democracy. South Africa is a significantly better country from 1994 and the gains of democracy must be maintained. The President should reaffirm renewed commitment to South Africans to improve primary healthcare, bring about quality education, reduce violent crime, and create job opportunities. The President's speech must be dedicated to the transformation of democratic achievements into tangible and implementable improvements.

The PSA further urges the President to focus on the improvement of working conditions for the country's workers. Government must implement measures that enhance labour laws and protect workers' rights. Labour laws and collective bargaining must be upheld and protected by government. The economy is crippled by the 42% unemployment rate and 66% youth unemployment rate. The eradication of load-shedding would support job creation. At the same time, workers cannot cope with the high cost of living, including food and fuel prices. The average worker supports a household of more than five people. The inflation rate must be reduced to protect workers against high debts.

The PSA also urges government to remove cost-cutting measures that constrain service delivery citizens. In addition, the President must support investment in infrastructure development to boost the economy. The PSA expresses the wish that the Government of National Unity will have a successful five-year term in support of the country's economic recovery.

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