

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA: State of the Nation Address a moment of reckoning
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As South Africa awaits the State of the Nation Address (SONA) by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 6 February 2025, the Public Servants Association (PSA) underscores the significance of this moment of reckoning and opportunity for the President to reflect on commitments made in 2024 and account for progress over the past six months.

The President, in his previous address, made bold promises to build a capable state, stimulate economic growth and job creation, reduce crime, and improve public healthcare and education. However, the reality experienced by millions of South Africans raises critical concerns about whether those promises have translated into tangible progress.

Whilst the PSA welcomed the President's emphasis on infrastructure development and investment to drive economic growth, South Africa's economy remains sluggish, with a growth rate of just 1%. This is insufficient to address the staggering 32.4% unemployment rate, leaving over seven million citizens without work. Without a robust and well-structured economic strategy, promises of job creation remain unfulfilled. The PSA calls for immediate implementation of a comprehensive economic plan that prioritises entrepreneurship, investment in education and skills development, and a more conducive business environment. Economic transformation must drive the policy, with collaboration between government, private sector, and civil society to drive meaningful progress.

A stable and effective government is the foundation of a capable state. Tensions in the Government of National Unity (GNU) regarding key policies, including the *Land Expropriation Act* and the National Health Insurance (NHI), have raised concerns about long-term stability. Political infighting and legislative deadlocks have left public servants in a state of uncertainty, hampering service delivery. The PSA urges the GNU leadership to foster unity and ensure that governance is not undermined by internal conflict. Corruption remains a significant challenge. The PSA calls for decisive action, including strengthening institutions such as the National Prosecuting Authority and the Special Investigating Unit, ensuring that corruption is met with decisive consequences.

South Africa remains one of the most unsafe countries in the world, with soaring crime rates. Despite previous commitments, the situation has not improved, with an estimated 57 people losing their lives to violent crime daily. The PSA proposes a multi-pronged approach to crime prevention, including increased police visibility, proper resourcing of law enforcement agencies, and community involvement through neighbourhood-watch programs. The integration of advanced technology, such as surveillance cameras and forensic analytics, must be prioritised to strengthen crime prevention efforts.

The country's public healthcare system remains in crisis, plagued by staff shortages, dilapidated infrastructure, and inadequate medical supplies. Whilst the introduction of the NHI is aimed at universal healthcare access, the PSA insists that its implementation must not come at the expense of private healthcare. A balanced approach is needed to ensure quality service delivery across all sectors.

South Africa's education system is failing to adequately prepare learners for the future, with high dropout rates and inadequate literacy and numeracy skills. The PSA is particularly concerned about the declining throughput rate, with many learners unable to complete their schooling. Urgent interventions are required, including curriculum reforms, educator training programs, improved infrastructure, and enhanced parental involvement. Investment in digital learning tools and resources must be prioritised to equip learners with skills suited for the modern economy.

The experiences of South Africans paint a stark picture of economic hardship, poor service delivery, rampant crime, a deteriorating healthcare system, and an education sector in decline. These issues cannot be ignored. The PSA urges the President to use the 2025 SONA to provide concrete and actionable plans that will drive real change. South Africans deserve more than just words. They need decisive leadership and immediate action.

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