

MAKING YOUR FUTURE WORK BETTER – Learning from Madiba and Ma Sisulu

Insession



The official Magazine of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

PRE-SONA EDITION 2019



SONA

PARLIAMENT:
Following up on
our commitments
to the people





Vision

An activist and responsive people's Parliament that improves the quality of life of South Africans and ensures enduring equality in our society.

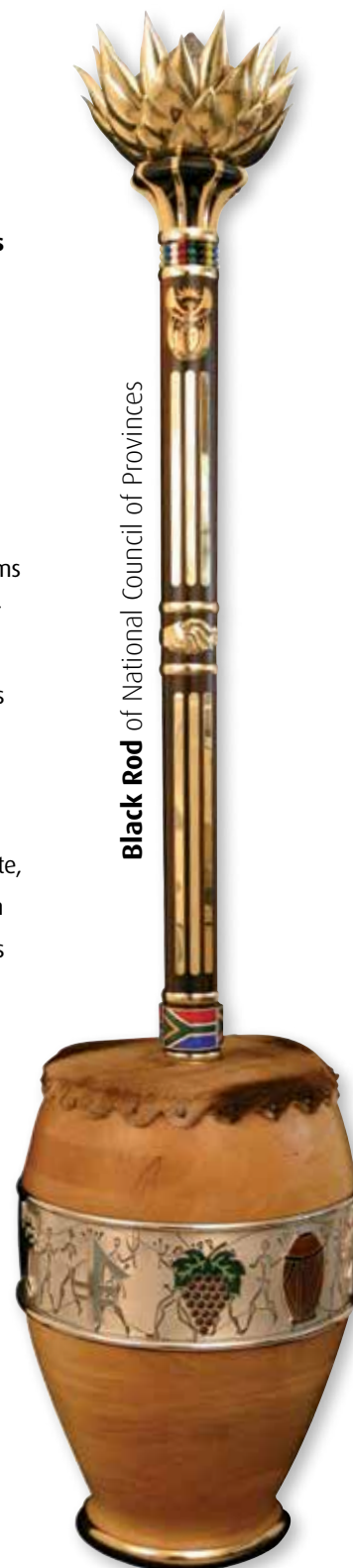
Mission

Parliament aims to provide a service to the people of South Africa by providing the following:

- A vibrant people's Assembly that intervenes and transforms society and addresses the development challenges of our people;
- Effective oversight over the Executive by strengthening its scrutiny of actions against the needs of South Africans;
- Participation of South Africans in the decision-making processes that affect their lives;
- A healthy relationship between the three arms of the State, that promotes efficient co-operative governance between the spheres of government, and ensures appropriate links with our region and the world; and
- An innovative, transformative, effective and efficient parliamentary service and administration that enables Members of Parliament to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities.

Strategic Objectives

1. **Strengthening oversight and accountability**
2. **Enhancing public involvement**
3. **Deepening engagement in international fora**
4. **Strengthening co-operative government**
5. **Strengthening legislative capacity**



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2019
STATE OF THE NATION
ADDRESS

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OUR IDEALS

Vision

An activist and responsive people's Parliament that improves the quality of life of South Africans and ensures enduring equality in our society.

Strategic Objectives

Strengthening oversight and accountability; enhancing public involvement; deepening engagement in international fora; strengthening cooperative government; strengthening legislative capacity.

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Presiding Officers of Parliament



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Mr Seiso Mohai



The significance of the State of the Nation Address

State of the Nation Address (SONA) traditionally takes place in Parliament in February and is attended by the three arms of the state: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The content of the address is the sole responsibility of the executive because it is the executive that has a mandate to run the country in accordance with the prescripts of the Constitution.

SONA is a political statement of the President that sets out a social contract that seeks to embrace the concerns and views of various constituencies that constitute the fabric of our nation. In that, it is a non-partisan address that maps a holistic pathway to the future. It is this contract, informed by a range of national priorities, that sets our country's public discourse that urges the public to enter into a profound and ongoing dialogue on various policy matters for the good of our civilisation. It is this social pact that also serves as a barometer to judge the performance of the state in the coming year.

For instance, SONA is closely watched by foreign investors for its assessment of our country's gains or challenges. They use it to deduce whether there is any shift in our country's economic policy and whether South Africa's economic policies are still in harmony with its economic interests. As such, SONA often determines investors' appetite for South African markets.

On the legislative front, Parliament determines its legislative priorities in

the coming year on the basis of SONA. It also uses the prescripts of SONA as a law-making framework to advance our country's developmental agenda as enshrined in the National Development Plan (NDP), and also as an oversight instrument to hold the Executive accountable.

To live up to this expectation, Parliament has ensured that this event

becomes a public event. Part of its broader public participation process involves the use of various forms of communication, such as radio, television and social media, to advance this objective.

Of all communication platforms, radio has been identified as the most effective mass communication outlet that reaches the widest possible South African audience in all the 11 languages in all the nine provinces. As a result, the Parliamentary Communication Services (PCS) uses 18 South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) radio stations and 60 community radio stations as central platforms for information dissemination and calls for public participation in the build-up to SONA. 📻



SONA brings together the three arms of State

The *State of the Nation Address (SONA) is called in terms of Section 42(5) of the Constitution by the President of the Republic. It is a joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament and one of the rare occasions that brings together the three arms of the State under one roof.*

SONA provides the President with an opportunity to speak to the nation on the general state of South Africa, to reflect on a wide range of political, economic and social matters within the domestic and global contexts, to account to the nation on the work of Government and to set out Government's programme of action. Traditionally, the President makes key government announcements during this important joint sitting of Parliament.

It is a ceremonial joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament, called specifically for the President to deliver his SONA and no other business may be considered on this day.

SONA usually takes place during February and is presided over by the Speaker and/or the Chairperson of the Council, by arrangement between them. During the week following the SONA, a debate of approximately two days is held on the SONA. The President is then given an opportunity to reply to the debate on the third day and to close the debate. The SONA is one of the major general debates of the parliamentary year.

The President delivers his SONA before Parliament because Parliament is charged with ensuring that the work flowing from this Address is implemented. Most importantly, SONA is delivered in Parliament because the priorities pronounced in it have budgetary implications demanding robust oversight – one of Parliament's constitutional responsibilities.

Parliament may accept, reject or amend the allocation of budgets to government departments to ensure that these are in line with national priorities as outlined in the SONA. Parliament may also withhold budgets of departments whose annual performance plans are not in line with these priorities.



This practice of the President delivering a state of the nation address goes back to the pre-democratic era. One such address is that of the former president Mr F W de Klerk titled Address by the State President, Mr F W De Klerk, at the Opening of the Second Session of the Ninth Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Cape Town, 2 February 1990.

During this address, the SONA occasion was used as a platform for announcement of the release of the founding President of the democratic SA, Mr Nelson Mandela, and other anti-apar-

theid political prisoners, by the last apartheid President, Mr. FW De Klerk.

The session is referred to as the State of the Nation Address to distinguish it from the opening address. This usually occurs at the start of a term of Parliament. In practice, the terms SONA and opening of parliament are used interchangeably.

In Botswana the SONA is called "the President's Speech"; in India it is called "the President's Address"; and in New South Wales in Australia it is called "the Governor's Speech".

How is the Joint Sitting to deliver SONA convened?

Section 84(2)(d) of the Constitution provides that the President may summon the National Assembly, the National Council of Provinces or Parliament to an extraordinary sitting to conduct special business. Joint Rule 7(1)(a) provides that the President may call a joint sitting of the Houses when it is necessary for the President to deliver the annual or a special address to Parliament.

What are the Ceremonials for SONA?

The official programme usually begins with three processions. There is the procession of provincial Speakers, provincial Premiers and the judiciary proceeding to the Assembly Chamber through the main entrance of the National Assembly building.

There is the arrival of the presidential cavalcade in the parliamentary precincts. The President alights, is welcomed by the Presiding Officers and their deputies and proceeds to the National Assembly Chamber. The aides-de-camp lead the presidential procession (see Aides-de-camp below).

Guards of Honour and Eminent Persons also line the route to the National Assembly Chamber.

Junior Guards of Honour comprise learners from schools around the country. They form a guard of honour from the gates of Parliament, where the President disembarks. The selection takes into account rural and urban dynamics.

The Civil Guard of Honour, selected on the basis of the parliamentary theme for the year, continues where the Junior Guard of Honour end.

The Eminent Persons are South Africans who have achieved outstanding results in their respective fields or who have been

recognised for their contribution to society. Provincial Speakers nominate them to be guests of Parliament for the SONA. These Guards of Honour and involvement of winners of a public participation radio programme have been withdrawn for the February 2019 SONA, to reduce costs.

Aides-de-camp

As the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, aides-de-camp are attached to the President of the Republic of South Africa at all ceremonies of the state. Their role in the country is limited to ceremonial duties. Once this task has been fulfilled they are immediately withdrawn.

During the SONA, they travel with the President from President's place of residence to Parliament.

The aides-de-camp lead the presidential procession onto a saluting dais, on the steps of the National Assembly, to receive the ceremonial honours, the guard of honour by the National Ceremonial Guard, the 21-gun salute, the national anthem and a salute flight. They then lead the procession into the Chamber and stand guard at the entrance of the Chamber.





21-gun salute

In 1842, the 21-gun salute became the international norm as the highest honour a nation rendered and it is fired in honour of the President. The first shot of the salute is synchronised to coincide with the playing of the national anthem. The salute takes one minute and 40 seconds.

In the Chamber

Members of both Houses must be seated before the procession enters. Each of the nine provinces is represented by its full quota of six permanent and four rotating members, seated in the removable cross-benches. A delegation of 10 South African Local Government Association members also occupies seats in the cross-benches.

Members' guests, representatives of statutory and constitutional bodies, the Judges President, provincial Speakers, Directors-general of state departments, guests from civil society approved by the Presiding Officers and staff of the Presidency and Parliament are accommodated in the National Assembly Galleries, the Officials' Bays to the right and left of the Speaker's Chair and in Room E249 and the Old Assembly Chamber via live audio-visual relay of the proceedings in the National Assembly Chamber.

The Presiding Officers and the President enter the Chamber in procession, preceded by the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod and followed by the Secretary to Parliament.

Imbongi

A new element of the SONA since the birth of democracy is Imbongi, the praise singer. Although our Parliament is based on the Westminster traditions, Imbongi praise singing gives African-ness pride of place –narrating the President's perSONAl history, clan and family lineage in song, dance and narration. Imbongi starts this narration as the presidential procession enters the Chamber.

Serjeant-at-Arms and Usher of the Black Rod

The Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod are responsible for compliance with security policy in and around the Chamber and galleries, and implement related instructions from the Speaker, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces and other presiding officers. They also perform



ceremonial functions, among others leading the procession into the Chamber at the start of proceedings.

The Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod lead the President and the Presiding Officers to their seats and proceed to place the Mace and the Black Rod in place before the Speaker and the Chairperson of the NCOP, respectively.

Mace and Black Rod

The Mace is a symbol of authority of the Speaker of the National Assembly. When the Serjeant-at-Arms carries the Mace into the debating chamber and places it before the Speaker of Parliament, it means that the National Assembly is formally in session and that its proceedings are official.

The Mace was designed to reflect the history, traditions, and diverse cultures and languages of South Africa. The design also celebrates the country's natural beauty, its plant and animal life and its rich mineral resources. The shape of the mace recalls the knobkerrie, an African symbol of defence as well as authority and leadership. Gold symbolises not only our country's natural wealth, but also the indigenous knowledge of Africa and the ancient African gold mining traditions of Mapungubwe.

The Black Rod is the symbol of the authority of the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The Black Rod reflects the important role of the provinces in the functioning of the NCOP. When the Usher of the Black Rod carries the Black Rod into the debating chamber, and places it before the Chairperson of the NCOP, it means that the NCOP is formally in session and that its proceedings are official.

The shape of the Black Rod is in the form of a knobkerrie, an African symbol of defence, of authority and leadership. The protea, at the head of the Black Rod, is South Africa's National flower, and symbolises national pride. The beadwork reflects on South Africa's diverse people and its rich cultural heritage. The clasping hands in gold symbolises freedom, peace and cooperation.

The black rod stands in a drum when the council is in session. The drum is an expression of the African tradi-



tion of drums calling people to gather and speak. It is also symbolic of our achievement of democracy through dialogue.

Start of Proceedings

The Presiding Officers, while standing, bows to the left and then to the right in greeting and requests a moment of silence for prayer or meditation. Once everyone is seated, the Presiding Officer reads out the notice calling the joint sitting and calls on the President to deliver his Address to the joint sitting.

As the joint sitting is called specifically for the President to deliver the SONA, no other business may be considered on this day. The President then delivers the SONA and no other debate takes place.

Members of all parties have an opportunity to express themselves on the SONA during a full two-day debate in the week following the SONA. On the third day, the President has an opportunity to reply to the debate and to close the debate.

The Joint Rules concerning order in joint sittings and the rules of debate, contained in Chapter 2A of the Joint Rules of Parliament applies to the SONA. Joint Rule 12 also further provides that when the Houses sit jointly the Assembly Rules on discipline remain applicable to Assembly members

and the Council Rules on discipline remain applicable to Council members. On conclusion of the President's speech, the Presiding Officer adjourns the sitting. Members are required to wait while the procession leaves the Chamber.

In previous years, the Presiding Officers would host a gala dinner after the SONA for Members of Parliament

and invited guests only. Consistent with Parliament's endeavour to scale down on costs in light of the prevailing economic conditions, this year, again, the post SONA gala dinner will not take place.

Media

Broadcast and photographic opportunities are also provided to the media inside and outside of the Chamber. 📺





Public Participation in a people's Parliament

Parliament's *constitutional mandate stipulates that it should communicate its work to all citizens as broadly as it can. This is to advance one of its constitutional obligations of "build an effective people's Parliament that is responsive to the needs of the people and that is driven by the ideal of realising a better quality of life for the people of South Africa". It is from this pronouncement that Parliament's commitment towards a people's Parliament and the declaration of the Fifth Parliament as an "Activist Parliament" emanate.*

Why is Parliament central to the delivery of the Address?

Parliament is an institution with unique significance in the political history of the people of this country. This democratic Parliament is esteemed for its profound influence on the development of South Africa's participatory democracy, founded on the strength of its Constitution, which is recognised worldwide for its commitment to human rights, regardless of race, religion or culture.

Parliament has a central role to play in our national life and has, since its

inception in 1994, been considered a treasure around the world for the way it exemplifies constitutional democracy and its unequivocal entrenchment of the culture of the respective and private rights of individuals and civil society. The constitutional principle of the separation of powers remains an inspiration to many across the globe.

SONA takes place before the two Houses of Parliament because these institutions are charged with ensuring that all the work that flows from this address becomes a lived reality. As such,

SONA is a social pact that informs the service delivery commitments of the national, provincial and local spheres of government for the coming financial year. It also is a guide for the annual performance plans of government departments at all levels of government.

SONA is South Africa's map for the year ahead. It alerts us to obstacles and plans how to avoid them.

SONA also has an influence on how laws are made and must ensure that they live up to the letter and spirit of SONA-identified priorities. To this end, departments appear before Parliament to determine whether the legislative prescripts that govern their mandates are in line with priorities articulated during SONA. Sometimes laws are amended or repealed to be in line with these priorities.

If a need arises, Parliament will, through its committees, embark on public hearings to garner public opinion and participation on the formulation of legislation, and then amend or repeal it in accordance with its legislative mandate. 🇿🇦





Debates that follow the Address

After *the State of the Nation Address (SONA), all the political parties at Parliament hold a debate to reflect, make comments and raise questions on matters raised by the President during SONA. This debate often takes the form of a Joint Sitting of Parliament before the representatives of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces.*

There is a cyclical link between SONA, the budget allocation and Parliament's oversight mandate. The budget is initiated and approved in Parliament. It is introduced to Parliament during SONA, where national priorities are promulgated. This address gives a hint

of how the budget of a given financial year will be divided and appropriated. Thereafter, the executive formulates the budgetary allocations and appropriations in accordance with the priorities promulgated during SONA. After these formulations have been

completed, the Minister of Finance invokes the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act to table before Parliament the state's budget.

When this process has unfolded, Parliament oversees the estimates of national expenditure votes by each department. Parliament uses its oversight instruments to verify how they relate to the strategic and annual performance plan votes of the departments' programmes. This process is followed by in-year monitoring reports and quarterly performance reports.



The Budget Review and Recommendations Report (BRRR) is a budgetary process that makes adjustments in budget allocations in accordance with shifts in policy priorities or the budgetary needs of the state.

Parliament has a vested interest in this process because it wants to ensure that these adjustments are done in accordance with the strategic and annual performance plans of each department. And in keeping with the Public Finance Act and the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act to safeguard the proper management of the public purse.

This is the case because there is an increasing realisation that

budgeting systems are the most important components of service delivery, said the Deputy Director of the Policy Unit of the Parliamentary Budget Office, Ms Nelia Orlandi. "The budget is the instrument for translating policies and plans into public goods and services. Any policy or plan without a budget attached to it is unlikely to be successfully implemented. Economic success depends on the ability of the government to employ limited resources with maximum effect."

The role of Parliament in this regard cannot be overstated, she said. One of

which is to "detect and prevent abuse. To prevent illegal and unconstitutional budgetary conduct on the part of the government. To make government budgetary operations more transparent and to hold the government answerable on how taxpayers' money is spent". This happens at different stages of the budget phases: from planning, formulation, legislative, to implementation phase. 🇿🇦





OUR SOUTH AFRICA – THE SUN

The sun heals the divisions of the past, improves the quality of life of all South Africans, frees the potential of each person and builds a united and democratic South Africa, taking its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.



OUR PEOPLE – THE PROTEA LEAVES

Our people, building on the foundation of a democratic and open society, freely elect representatives, acting as a voice of the people and providing a national forum for public consideration of issues.



OUR PARLIAMENT – THE DRUM

The drum calls the people's Parliament, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, to consider national and provincial issues, ensuring government by the people under the Constitution.



OUR CONSTITUTION – THE BOOK

Our Constitution lays the foundation for a democratic and open society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. It is the supreme law of our country, and ensures government by the people.