



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS



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What is the State of the Nation Address?

- It is an annual address to the nation by the President of the Republic of South Africa as the Head of State. It is delivered at a joint sitting of Parliament – customarily at the beginning of an annual session.

When is the State of the Nation Address happening?

- The State of the Nation Address (or SONA) will be delivered at a joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament (National Assembly and National Council of Provinces) on 11 February 2016 at 7pm.
- The proceedings will be broadcast live from Parliament from 5pm onwards.

What is the theme for the 2016 State of the Nation Address?

- The 2016 theme is: ***“Following up on our commitments to the people”***.

What happens during the State of the Nation Address?

- The President sets out government’s key policy objectives and deliverables for the year ahead.
- It highlights the achievements and challenges experienced over the past year and maps the year ahead and beyond.
- It covers wide-ranging political, economic and social matters and considers the general state of South Africa.
- It deliberates on South Africa’s domestic affairs as well as its continental and international relations.
- The full address is recorded in the Minutes of Proceedings.

What happens after the State of the Nation Address?

- Political parties have an opportunity to debate, comment and raise questions on matters addressed in the President’s speech during a debate on the President’s State of the Nation Address.
- This debate usually takes place over two days in a joint sitting. This year the debate is scheduled for 16 to 17 February.
- The President will have the opportunity to reply to the debate on 18 February 2016.

The link between the State of the Nation Address, Budget and the oversight function of Parliament

- The State of the Nation Address outlines government’s priorities for the year.
- The Minister of Finance allocates the Budget in line with the priorities outlined in the State of the Nation Address.
- Parliament conducts oversight to ensure that government delivers on the priorities set out in the State of the Nation Address and that allocated funds are spent accordingly.

How can the public participate in the State of the Nation Address?

- Attending the State of the Nation Address as invited guests of Parliament
- Part of Civil Guards of Honour, Junior Guards of Honour or Eminent persons.
 - The Civil Guards of Honour are made up of ordinary South Africans.
 - The Junior Guards of Honour are drawn from schools around SA.
 - Eminent persons are nominated by the Speaker of each Provincial Legislature – nominated on the basis of their contribution to society.

How can you access more information about the State of the Nation Address or about what’s happening in our Parliament?

- The State of the Nation of Address will be broadcast live on:
 - SABC radio stations
 - SABC TV
 - DSTV Channel 408
 - eNCA
 - ANN7

