

Operation Phakisa to move SA forward

Through Operation Phakisa government aims to implement its policies and programmes better, faster and more effectively.

This is according to President Jacob Zuma, who said the project was designed to answer fundamental implementation questions and find solutions, as the country tries to address poverty, inequality and unemployment, among other challenges, as stipulated in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030.

Malaysian Big Fast Results approach

Zuma first announced Operation Phakisa during his reply to the State of the Nation Address debate, last month.



Image: GQIS

Operation Phakisa is an adaptation of the Big Fast Results methodology that was first applied by the Malaysian Government, successfully, in the delivery of its economic transformation programme.

The operation addressed their national key priority areas such as, poverty, crime and unemployment.

It involves setting up clear targets and follows up with on-going monitoring process which makes the results public.

Through this initiative, the Malaysian government was able to register impressive results within a short period.

Zuma said South Africa has renamed the Malaysian Big Fast Results approach as Operation Phakisa - from a Sesotho word, which means "Hurry Up", to highlight the urgency with which government wants to deliver on some of the priorities encompassed in the NDP.

The initiative will initially be implemented in two sectors, the ocean economy and health sector, especially clinics.

First Phase of Operation Phakisa

The first phase of the implementation will focus on unlocking the economic potential of South Africa's oceans.

This will be done together with representatives from government, industry, labour, civil society and academia to collaborate in unlocking the economic potential.

Speaking at the launch of the initiative at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre, in Durban, on Saturday, President Zuma said government chose the ocean economy with good reason.

"South Africa is uniquely bordered by the ocean on three sides - east, south and west. With the inclusion of Prince Edward and Marion Islands in the southern ocean, the coastline is approximately 3,924km long," he told the delegates, which included industry, labour, civil society and academia. But despite this, the vast ocean space is relatively unexplored in terms of its economic potential.

"The ocean has a potential to contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) up to R177bn. The ocean also has a potential to contribute between eight hundred and one million direct jobs," President Zuma said.

In 2010, the oceans contributed approximately R54bn to South Africa's GDP and accounted for approximately 316,000

jobs.

Also speaking at the launch, Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molwea said there is a realisation and acknowledgement of the invaluable contribution of oceans and coasts to the development from throughout the continent.

"The long term developmental programmes of the world can no longer be based on land resources only; it must also include the coast and ocean resources."

To tap into the ocean, government has identified four priority sectors, in which Operation Phakisa will focus on. These are marine transport and manufacturing activities, such as coastal shipping, trans-shipment, boat building, repair and refurbishment; offshore oil and gas exploration; aquaculture and marine protection services and ocean governance.

Marine transport, manufacturing

In marine transport and manufacturing - government will explore the country's natural advantage in maritime transport and manufacturing by capturing the benefits of growing volumes of cargo handling, sea and coastal shipping and supporting transport activities such as storage and warehousing.

In addition, South Africa can utilise its location and expertise to increase its share of the global marine manufacturing market, including ship-building and repair, rig repair and refurbishment or boat-building.

"Against this backdrop, the aspiration of this workstream is to grow the marine transport and manufacturing sector over the next five years, to increase the contribution to GDP and multiply the number of jobs in South Africa."

Offshore oil, gas exploration

On offshore oil and gas exploration - government is looking at further enhancing the enabling environment for exploration of oil and gas wells, resulting in an increased number of exploration wells drilled, while simultaneously maximising the value captured for South Africa.

Mechanisms for achieving this will include providing an enabling policy and legislative environment; promoting inclusive economic growth; addressing the skills gaps and overcoming infrastructure challenges.

Aquaculture

With regards to aquaculture - government will be looking at enhancing growth in the sector through increasing the value contribution of all segments across the aquaculture value chain, while creating jobs especially in fish processing and marketing.

Aquaculture is relatively an underdeveloped area in South Africa despite it being an increasingly important contribution to food security globally.

Despite its relatively small size, aquaculture in South Africa has shown strong growth of 6.5 percent per annum.

Marine protection services, governance

While on marine protection services and governance - the aspiration is to develop an incremental and integrated approach to planning, monitoring and execution of ocean governance and enforcement in the next few years

Government has recognised the need to continuously balance the economic opportunities which the ocean space affords, while maintaining its environmental integrity.

This will be achieved by developing an institutional framework for the management of South Africa's ocean space, improving the protection of South Africa's oceans particularly around critically endangered ecosystems, and addressing the skills gap, among others.

Second Phase of Operation Phakisa

The second implementation of Operation Phakisa will be to pilot the health sector's Ideal Clinic Initiative to improve service delivery in the country's clinics nationwide, which will commence later in 2014.

The health sector laboratory will be undertaken in collaboration with provinces, districts and clinic managers with the aim of producing a detailed plan for improving service delivery in public sector clinics in all provinces, including indicators, targets and timeframes; and a guideline for clinic managers to develop and sustain these improvements.

Success of Operation Phakisa

The key step in Operation Phakisa's approach, according to the President, will be the intensive work sessions that will need to deliver complete and signed-off action plans for presentation to Cabinet.

"These work sessions will help create transparency and help to remove bottlenecks and resolve the most critical challenges facing a sector."

The teams, which are made up of over 180 delegates from national and provincial government departments; civil society, private sector, labour and academia, began their work, last week, and will continue working until 15 August 2014.

Despite the introduction of the initiative - the President said there is still a lot of work to be done.

"It is still early days for Operation Phakisa on the ocean economy. The teams will devote the next few weeks to further develop these aspirations and ideas, setting ambitious targets and formulating detailed delivery plans for accelerating delivery."

Once the detailed delivery plans have been completed, President Zuma said government will then move into the implementation phase of Operation Phakisa - with him taking a personal interest in monitoring the progress and implementing the project.

"The people of South Africa deserve much better from all of us. Through Operation Phakisa and all our other key strategic interventions to achieve the goals of the National Development Plan, we must work tirelessly to move our country forward and build a better life for all, especially the poor and the working class," he said, urging key role players to commit fully to the success of this programme.

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