

Presidency gears up for SONA

Preparations are well underway at the Presidency for the delivery of the State of the Nation Address (SONA) by President Jacob Zuma on 14 February to a joint sitting of Parliament.



(Image: GCIS)

Cabinet has just emerged from a four-day lekgotla at which the 2013 programme of action was discussed intensively.

The 2013 SONA will be the first that is delivered in the context of the National Development Plan (NDP), which has been adopted as the high level framework and national roadmap to which all government programmes and plans will be aligned from 2013, with a focus on implementation.

"The NDP was endorsed by all political parties in the National Assembly on 15 August last year, and enjoys the support of all sectors of society," said the Presidency on Sunday.

The NDP was produced by the National Planning Commission (NPC) in the Presidency, which is chaired by Minister Trevor Manuel, with Mr Cyril Ramaphosa as Deputy Chairperson.

The NPC was established by President Zuma in 2009 and was given the task of producing the national plan within 18 months.

In SONA 2013, the President will provide an update on all key programmatic areas, especially the five priorities - education, health, creating decent work, the fight against crime as well as rural development and land reform.

He will also outline progress made in the implementation of the New Growth Path, the economic strategy within the NDP. The New Growth Path promotes inclusive growth and job creation in six job drivers - infrastructure development, agriculture, mining and beneficiation, manufacturing, the green economy and tourism.

The SONA will be preceded by a first ever community and stakeholder outreach programme by principals in the Presidency, designed to hear the views of the public on a number of issues.

The programme:

- On 12 February, President Zuma will visit Tshwane South FET College in Mabopane, Pretoria. The President met with FET college principals last year, and now wants to obtain firsthand experience of how FET colleges operate given the emphasis government is giving to the development of technical skills that are needed by the economy.

He will be accompanied by the Ministers of Higher Education and Training, Labour, Public Enterprises as well as the Gauteng Premier.

- On the same day, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe will visit Worcester, where he will interact with farmers and farmworkers. He will be accompanied by the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Gugile Nkwinti and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tina Joematt-Petersen.
- On 13 February, Manuel and Ramaphosa will hold a dialogue with small business and the youth and also undertake walkabouts around Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha, promoting the National Development Plan and the country's vision going forward to 2030.
- On 15 February, President Zuma will close the SONA week with a visit to the displaced families who live at OR Tambo hall, Khayelitsha, following the devastating fires in December.

The Presidency also invites members of the public to send their comments on what they would like to see in the SONA, on Facebook (www.facebook.com/presidencyza) and twitter (@PresidencyZA).

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