

# SONA 2022 is Cyril's chance to win back the trust of the nation

Ahead of the 2022 State of the Nation Address (SONA) to be tabled by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Thursday evening, UASA trade union calls for clear plans on the economic and social issues that have South Africans reeling.

By [Abigail Moyo](#) 8 Feb 2022



Source: [UhSplash](#)

In a post-Covid 19 world, the country needs stern economic intervention, sustainable job creation and other strategies to get back on track.

South Africans are overwhelmed by the knowledge that government and the state failed us miserably on so many levels. The nation has had enough of Ramaphosa's familiar "feel-good" addresses; instead, we demand answers and sustainable plans for the year and the future. We have had enough of job summits and costly initiatives in the hope of attracting investors with no concrete results.

Last year we saw fuel prices skyrocket to the highest they have ever been, increasing unemployment, the repo rate lifting its head from record lows, and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) reaching 5%. The July riot and looting in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng caused financial and structural damage running into the billions.

## The state of the Zondo Commission

State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) remain a glaring disgrace. Our members at Denel have last seen full salaries paid more than 20 months ago. During last year's SONA, the first report of the Zondo Commission into State Capture had already been published and saw Ramaphosa promising the rooting out of all forms of corruption. No action has been taken yet.

The commission's second report was published last week with more shocking revelations. Will we continue to turn a blind eye to leaders who emptied SOE coffers to enrich themselves, or will we start growing these enterprises for the purpose they were intended – to provide access to water, electricity, sanitation and transportation for South Africans? SOEs are also among the primary sources of urban employment.

SOE Denel was hollowed out and is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, having received government bailouts since 2019. How much more taxpayers' money must be pumped into the enterprise before the company can sustain itself and start paying salaries?

## **Power cuts continue to undermine business operations**

Load shedding continues to drive the economy to the edge as power cuts put businesses at risk. How does Eskom even consider increasing its tariffs when it can't meet the power demand by individuals and companies? How can a country that fails to maintain SOEs even dream of economic recovery?



TRANSPORT

Road closures to be implemented ahead of SONA

10 Feb 2022

Others, such as PRASA, SAA and the SABC, are ridding themselves of workers they cannot pay. Corrupt officials who stole Covid-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) and South African Social Services Agency (SASSA) grants are heartless thugs, stealing from the needy they promised to serve. No one has yet been held accountable for these crimes.

It has become painfully clear that South Africans can't depend on the South African Police Service, the State Security Agency (SSA) and the South African Defence Force to keep them safe. The SSA failed miserably to provide government with intelligence on domestic threats to national stability, the constitutional order, and the safety and well-being of our people, as is its mandate.

## **Lack of accountability raises more questions**

Under the security cluster's watch, mobs looted and burned businesses in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng with devastating consequences, while the Parliament buildings were consumed by fire. Ramaphosa used strident language after the looting, promising that no stone would be left unturned to find and punish the instigators. We heard that 17 leaders of the looters had been identified. Disappointingly - but sadly not unexpected - one has been apprehended or held to book.

South Africa needs a solid and practical approach to solve its problems. We can no longer afford or deal with national leaders who put party politics first to the detriment of citizens' well-being. We need a confident president and government that puts and serves its people first.

Now is the time to reassure South Africans by taking action and fulfilling the promises that we have come to view as empty words. We want to believe again that we can build a prosperous society and country together.

Ramaphosa must take this opportunity to restore the trust of the people. We, therefore, expect Ramaphosa to present:

- Decisive actions against the corrupt leaders who ruined our SOEs.
- Resolute plans to restore SOEs to the proud institutions they once were.
- Firm action to review and upgrade the country's security cluster
- Unwavering commitment to restore the economy, even if this means involving the private sector to a greater extent.

- Concrete steps for job creation, recognising that this is impossible without a growing economy.
- Plans for a dedicated approach to the development of scarce skills.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Abigail Moyo is UASA's Public Relations and Research Officer

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>