

State of the Nation Address By His Excellency Jacob G Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa on the occasion of the Joint Sitting of Parliament, Cape Town

9 Feb 2012

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,
Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP,
Deputy President of the Republic, Honourable Kgalema Motlanthe,
Former Deputy President FW De Klerk,
Former Deputy President Baleka Mbete,
Honourable Chief Justice of the Republic, and all esteemed members of the Judiciary,
Honourable Chairperson of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and Speaker of the Parliament of Zimbabwe; Mr Lovemore Moyo,
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Honourable Minister of International Relations of the Republic of Angola, Mr Rebelo Chikoti,
Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Mozambique, Mr Julio Baloi,
Distinguished Premiers and Speakers of our Provinces,
Chairperson of SALGA, and all local government leadership,
Chairperson of the National House of Traditional Leaders,
The Heads of Chapter 9 Institutions,
The Governor of the Reserve Bank,
Leaders of all sectors from business, sports, traditional and religious leaders,
Members of the diplomatic corps,
Special and distinguished guests,
Fellow South Africans,
Dumelang, good evening, goeienaand, molweni, thobela, xewani!

I would like to extend warm greetings to all on this important day.

It is an honour to speak to South Africans in this House and in their homes and viewing centres around the country.

I also extend a warm welcome to Ambassadors and High Commissioners representing 146 countries, with which South Africa has diplomatic relations. We value your presence in our country.

Compatriots and friends,

This State of the Nation Address takes place during a significant year in the history of our country, the centenary of the ruling party, the African National Congress.

In marking this occasion we are recognising the work of all South Africans in bringing about a truly free, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous country.

We wish to single out the former presidents of the ANC who led our struggle for liberation and of creating a better life across generations. We salute John Langalibalele Dube, Sefako Makgatho, Zac Mahabane, Josiah Gumede, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, AB Xuma, JS Moroka, Chief Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki.

We welcome the families of the former ANC Presidents who are our special guests this evening.

We also recognise other components of the liberation movement - the Black Consciousness Movement which was led by Mr Steve Biko, whose son Samora is also our special guest, and the Pan-Africanist Congress which was led by Mr Robert Sobukwe.

We acknowledge too, the contribution of the late former MP, Ms Helen Suzman, who was a lone voice in this very House, speaking out against oppressive laws.

Honourable Members,

Compatriots and friends,

The year 2012 is also special because it marks the 16th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic, which gives full expression to our democratic ideals.

The Constitution is South Africa's fundamental vision statement, which guides our policies and actions. We reaffirm our commitment to advance the ideals of our country's Constitution at all times.

Compatriots and friends,

At the January Cabinet lekgotla, we decided to undertake a mid-term review, looking at progress from 2009 till now instead of the usual annual review.

The mid-term review indicated steady progress in various areas such as health, education, the fight against crime, human settlements, energy, water provision, rural development and others.

However, the triple challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality persists, despite the progress made. Africans, women and the youth continue to suffer most from this challenge.

Somlomo nosihlalo abahloniphekileyo,

Njengekhabhinethi kazwelonke sithathe isinqumo sokuthi kufanele senze ngokwedlulele, ukukhulisa umnotho wezwe, ukuze siqede lezizinkinga zokwesweleka kwemisebenzi, ubumpofu kanye nokungalingani ezweni.

Ilezo zinto ezintathu esizobhekana nazo ngqo, kulonyaka naseminyakeni ezayo.

(Honourable Speaker and Honourable Chairperson

As a national Cabinet, we have taken the decision that we should do more to grow the country's economy, in order to get rid of the problems of unemployment, poverty and inequality in the country.

Those are the three things that we will face head on, this year and in the coming years.)

Compatriots,

When freedom was attained in 1994, South Africa inherited a problem of structural unemployment which goes back to the 1970s. Employment continued to deteriorate in the 1990s and the early 2000s due to slow growth and declining employment in gold mining and agriculture.

Although jobs grew rapidly during the boom of 2003 to 2008, unemployment did not fall below 20%.

Employment received another setback in the recession of 2009.

Fortunately, Government entered the 2008-2009 recession with healthy public finances, and a comparatively low level of debt.

This allowed for a flexible response to deteriorating economic conditions.

For example, we increased spending on social security and on infrastructure development to stimulate the economy, mainly through the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup build programme.

Informed by some of these difficulties and the need to move away from piecemeal planning, we took a decision in 2009 to establish the National Planning Commission and asked them to produce a national development plan for the country, informed by the Constitution of the Republic.

The Commission released the first draft of the National Development Plan [PDF] for consideration, which looks at where we want to be in 20 years' time.

The Plan also directly addresses the elimination of poverty and inequality as critical points that must be attended to.

The solution for the country therefore, is higher growth and job creation to reduce and ultimately eradicate poverty and inequality.

As a developmental state that is located at the centre of a mixed economy, we see our role as being to lead and guide the economy and to intervene in the interest of the poor, given the history of our country.

Informed by this responsibility, in 2010 we launched the New Growth Path framework and identified our job drivers as infrastructure development, tourism, agriculture, mining, manufacturing and the green economy.

We declared 2011 the year of job creation, and mobilised our social partners, namely business, labour and the community sector, to work with us in implementing the New Growth Path.

The results are encouraging, although we are not out of the woods yet, given the global economic situation.

The fourth quarter figures released on Tuesday, indicate that the rate of unemployment has come down from twenty-five percent to 23.9% as a result of new jobs.

During 2011, a total of 365 000 people were employed. This is the country's best performance since the recession of 2008.

What is also important is that all the new jobs are in the formal sector of the economy, in sectors such as mining, transport, community services and trade to name a few.

There are two main things that we did right in 2011 which are contributing to this joint success.

Firstly, we mainstreamed job creation in every government entity including state owned enterprises.

Secondly, we strengthened social dialogue and cooperation between government, business and the community sector.

The Accords, signed by government, business and labour on procurement, skills development, basic education, and the green economy, confirm our common purpose and determination to build this country.

Government alone cannot solve the challenges faced by the country, but working together, solutions are possible.

Compatriots,

Let me take this opportunity to report back on the undertakings made in the SONA last year.

The Job Fund which we announced last year began operating in June. Over 2 500 applications were received in the first round. Project allocations of over one billion rand have been committed.

We had also announced 20 billion rand worth of incentives under Section 12(i) of the Income Tax Act, designed to support new industrial projects and manufacturing, and seven projects with an investment value of 8,4 billion rand were approved.

The procurement regulations empowering the Department of Trade and Industry to designate specific industries where local content is prescribed came into effect in December.

The sectors include clothing textiles, canned vegetables, leather and footwear.

Progress has also been made in amalgamating small business institutions, and a new entity will be launched this year.

We had announced 10 billion rand to be set aside by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) for job creation.

To date, about one point five billion rand was approved for 60 companies to promote job creation.

Compatriots and friends,

The mining industry, one of the job drivers in the New Growth Path, plays a critical role in the socio-economic development of the country.

As part of addressing the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment, government has developed a beneficiation strategy, which seeks to provide opportunities in the downstream part of the minerals sector.

We remain committed to the creation of a favourable and globally competitive mining sector, and to promote the industry to attract investment and achieve both industrial growth and much-needed transformation.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Chairperson of the NCOP,

The work done last year indicates that if we continue to grow reasonably well, we will begin to write a new story about South Africa—the story of how, working together, we drove back unemployment and reduced economic inequality and poverty.

It is beginning to look possible.

We must not lose this momentum.

For the year 2012 and beyond, we invite the nation to join government in a massive infrastructure development drive.

Baba Somlomo noSihlalo,

Sizoqala umkhankaso omkhulu wokwakha izingqalazizinda ezweni lonke. Lokhu kuzophakamisa izinga lomnotho, futhi kuveze amathuba emisebenzi.

(Mr Speaker and Chairperson

We are going to launch a huge campaign of building the infrastructure nationwide. This will boost the level of economy and create job opportunities.)

Compatriots,

We will use the project management expertise gained during the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup to make this project a success.

The infrastructure plan will be driven and overseen by the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission, (PICC), which was established in September, bringing together Ministers, Premiers and Metro Mayors under the leadership of the President and the Deputy President.

The PICC has identified and developed projects and infrastructure initiatives from state-owned enterprises as well as national, provincial and local government departments.

These have been clustered, sequenced and prioritised into a pipeline of strategic integrated projects.

We have chosen five major geographically-focussed programmes, as well as projects focusing on health and basic education infrastructure, information and communication technologies and regional integration.

The projects are as follows:

Firstly, we plan to develop and integrate rail, road and water infrastructure, centred around two main areas in Limpopo: the Waterberg in the Western part of the province and Steelpoort in the eastern part.

These efforts are intended to unlock the enormous mineral belt of coal, platinum, palladium, chrome and other minerals, in order to facilitate increased mining as well as stepped-up beneficiation of minerals.

Using the developments in Limpopo as a base, we will expand rail transport in Mpumalanga, connecting coalfields to power stations.

This will enable us to decisively shift from road to rail in the transportation of coal, which has caused a deterioration of the roads in Mpumalanga.

The eastern parts of the North West province will also benefit from the greater focus on infrastructure connected to mining and mineral beneficiation.

Secondly, we will improve the movement of goods and economic integration through a Durban-Free State-Gauteng logistics and industrial corridor.

This project is intended to connect the major economic centres of Gauteng and Durban/Pinetown, and at the same time, connect these centres with improved export capacity through our sea-ports.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce the Market Demand Strategy of Transnet, which entails an investment, over the next seven years, of three hundred billion rand in capital projects.

Of this amount, 200 billion rand is allocated to rail projects and the majority of the balance, to projects in the ports.

Amongst the list of planned projects, is the expansion of the Iron Ore Export channel from 60 million tons per annum to 82 million tons per annum.

It also includes various improvements to the Durban-Gauteng Rail corridor and the phased development of a new 16 million tons per annum manganese export channel through the Port of Ngqura in Nelson Mandela Bay.

The Market Demand Strategy will result in the creation of more jobs in the South African economy, as well as increased localization and Black Economic Empowerment. It will also position South Africa as a regional trans-shipment hub for Sub-Saharan Africa and deliver on NEPAD's regional integration agenda.

We have also been looking at the necessity of reducing port charges, as part of reducing the costs of doing business. The issue of high port charges was one of those raised sharply by the automotive sector in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage during my performance monitoring visit to the sector last year.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the Port Regulator and Transnet have agreed to an arrangement which will result in exporters of manufactured goods, receiving a significant decrease in port charges, during the coming year, equal to about 1 billion rand in total.

Thirdly, we will develop a major new South Eastern node that will improve the industrial and agricultural development and export capacity of the Eastern Cape region, and expand the province's economic and logistics linkages with the Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

In the former Transkei part of the Eastern Cape, we are committed to building a dam using the Umzimvubu River as the source, in order to expand agricultural production.

In addition, the implementation of the Mthatha revitalization project, which is a Presidential special project, is proceeding very well.

Work is at an advanced stage to improve water, sanitation, electricity, roads, human settlements, airport development and institutional and governance issues.

Fourthly, in the North West, we will expand the roll-out of water, roads, rail and electricity infrastructure. Ten priority roads will be upgraded.

Fifthly, we see enormous potential along the west coast of the country and need to improve infrastructure to unlock this potential.

Our plans include the expansion of the iron-ore rail line between Sishen in Northern Cape and Saldanha Bay in the Western Cape, which will create large numbers of jobs in both provinces.

The iron-ore capacity on the transport-side will increase capacity to 100 million tons per annum.

This will allow for the expansion of iron-ore mining over the next decade to feed the developing world's growing investment in infrastructure and industrial activities.

Compatriots,

We have also identified critical social infrastructure projects. These include projects aimed at laying the basis for the National Health Insurance system such as the refurbishment of hospitals and nurses' homes.

A total of 300 million rand has been allocated for the preparatory work towards building new universities in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape.

Another infrastructure project with great potential is South Africa's bid to host the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope in partnership with eight other African countries. The winning bid will be announced next month. We urge you to support the country's bid.

Lastly, our infrastructure work extends beyond our borders. South Africa champions the North-South Road and Rail Corridor, which is part of the African Union's NEPAD Presidential Infrastructure Championing initiative [PDF].

Work in this regard, comprises various inter-related projects that cover roads and railways, border crossings, energy and information and communication technologies.

Compatriots,

The massive investment in infrastructure must leave more than just power stations, rail-lines, dams and roads. It must industrialise the country, generate skills and boost much needed job creation.

I will convene a Presidential infrastructure summit to discuss the implementation of the plan with potential investors and social partners.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chairperson of the NCOP,

I would now like to discuss matters relating to the extension of basic services, addressing inequalities, peace and security and social cohesion.

I received a lot of valuable correspondence in the run-up to this SONA. Such interaction enables us keep in touch with our people and their needs.

I received an email relating to a housing problem from Mzukisi Mali, a public servant from the Fingo area in Grahamstown. He wrote;

"In 1994 my income was too high to get an RDP and too low to get a bond, this continued until to date. I have three children and my wife is not working.

"When I apply for an RDP I am told that I do not qualify and cannot get a bond because I am risky to the banks..."

Fortunately we have gone some way to address the problem facing Mr Mali and many others.

In 2010, we announced a one billion rand guarantee fund to promote access to loans.

We are pleased to report that this fund will start its operations in April, managed by the National Housing Finance Corporation. The scheme will enable the Banks to lend to people who are in a similar situation as Mr Mali.

In addition, from April, people earning between three thousand five hundred rand and R15 000, will be able to obtain a subsidy of up to R83 000 from Provinces, to enable them to obtain housing finance from an accredited Bank.

Ungalilahli ithemba Mr Mali nabaningi abanye, kuzolunga ngenxa yalomxhaso ozotholakala kohulumeni bezifundazwe, kanye nalomshwalense omusha ozokwenza kubelula kumabhange ukuthi aniboleke imali.

(Do not despair Mr Mali, as well as many others, the situation will get better as a result of this funding which will be available from provincial governments as well as the new insurance scheme which will make it easier for the banks to give you loans.)

Compatriots,

There is an ongoing concern from business and communities about high electricity costs.

I have asked Eskom to seek options on how the price increase requirement may be reduced over the next few years, in support of economic growth and job creation and give me proposals for consideration.

We need an electricity price path which will ensure that Eskom and the industry remain financially viable and sustainable, but which remains affordable especially for the poor.

However to achieve sustainability, a pact will be required with all South Africans – including business, labour, municipalities, communities and all customers and suppliers.

We must save electricity.

For the next two years, until the Medupi and Kusile power stations come into operation, the electricity system will be very tight.

We should all play our part in order to avoid load shedding.

To increase energy capacity we will continue searching for renewable energy sources, especially solar electricity and biofuels as we implement the Green Economy Accord with economic stakeholders.

To date we have installed more than 220 000 solar geysers nationwide.

The Government target is one million solar geysers by 2014-2015.

Honourable Members,

Compatriots,

Government continues to extend access to basic water supply. However, clearly, water access is still a challenge in some areas.

An email from Mmatsheko Pine from Hammanskraal is a case in point.

The writer says; "There is the area called Ngobi near Hammanskraal, under Moretele Local Municipality, the people residing in the area are now old, aged and mostly sick.

"The area has been without water for the past two years. People rely on rain to harvest water.

There are water pipes and machines installed but the problem is said to be pressure to pump water. Could your office kindly assist with the powers that be?"

I have asked the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs to investigate this matter with a view to finding an urgent solution.

Water expansion has been delayed in some parts of the country due to a lack of infrastructure. This is being attended to. For example, five new water augmentation schemes are on schedule.

These are Olifants River Water Resource in Steelpoort in Limpopo Province, the Vaal River Eastern Sub-System in Secunda in Mpumalanga, Komati Water Augmentation Scheme in Nkangala in Mpumalanga, the raising of Hazelmere dam in KwaZulu-Natal and the Clan William Dam in Clan William in the Western Cape. In addition, nine out of 25 dams have been rehabilitated.

In relation to the announcements we made during the United Nations COP17 climate change conference, an amount of 248 million rand is to be invested over next two years to deal with the issue of Acid Mine Drainage in Witwatersrand.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the inter-ministerial committee on COP17 for making the conference a huge success

The final outcome of COP17 was historic and precedent setting, ranking with the 1997 conference where the Kyoto Protocol was adopted.

Building on the success of COP17, South Africa will participate in the Rio plus 20 Summit in Brazil, which marks the 10th anniversary of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Chairperson,

Our intensive focus on education is paying off.

We are pleased that the matric percentage pass is on an upward trend. We congratulate the teachers, learners, parents and the communities for the efforts.

We will continue to invest in producing more teachers who can teach mathematics, science and African languages.

Compatriots,

Our call to teachers to be in school, in class, on time, teaching for at least seven hours a day remains pivotal to success. We thank the teacher unions for supporting this campaign.

A major achievement is the doubling of Grade R enrolment, from 300 000 in 2003 to 705 000 in 2011. We appear poised to meet our target of 100% coverage for Grade R by 2014.

To fight poverty and inequality and to keep learners in school, over 8 million learners attend no-fee schools while over eight million benefit from government's school feeding scheme.

Last year, national government instituted a Section 100 (1)(b) intervention in the Eastern Cape, to assist the department of education to improve the delivery of education.

Problems included non-delivery of textbooks, non-payment of scholar transport, excess teachers and a general poor culture of learning and teaching.

The implementation of the intervention will continue and we are working well with the province in this regard. *Sizimisele ukwenza immeko yemfundo ibengcono eMpuma Koloni. (We are also keen to improve the education situation in the Eastern Cape.)* We call on all stakeholders to work with us to make this turnaround a success.

Compatriots,

During the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, we resolved that the South African legacy would be to promote universal access to education.

School attendance in the country is now close to 100 percent for the compulsory band, 7-15 years of age. But we remain concerned by the report of the General Household Survey in 2010 that just over 120 000 children in that band are out of school.

Grade 10 drop outs appear to be a problem, particularly in the rural and farm areas of the Western Cape.

The national Government will work closely with the Western Cape government, to trace these learners and provide support so that they do not lose their future.

With regards to higher education, we are exceeding targets. Close to 14 000 learners were placed in workplace learning opportunities over the past year, and over 11 000 artisans have completed their trade tests.

Siyajabula ukubona ukuthi liyanda inani lentsha efunda amakhono kulamakolishi abizwa phecelezi ngama-Further Education and Training Colleges.

Siyaninxusa bazali ukuthi nigqugquzele izingane zifunde kulamakolishi. Akufanele zicabange ukuthi imisebenzi ifundelwa emanyuvesi kuphela.

Siyawadinga amakhono atholakala kulamakolishi.

(We are pleased to see that there is a growing number of young people who are learning skills through Further Education and Training colleges.

We are pleading to you parents to encourage children to study at these colleges. They should not think that training can only be obtained from universities.

We also need skills that are obtained from these colleges.)

To expand access to tertiary education as per our announcement last year, 200 million rand was utilised to assist 25 000 students to pay off their debts to institutions of higher learning.

Compatriots and friends,

We congratulate the health sector as well as the South African National Aids Council led by the Deputy President of the Republic on the success of the HIV and AIDS programme.

While we are doing well with regards to treatment and the prevention of mother to child transmission, general prevention efforts must also be accelerated.

We also wish to encourage South Africans to live healthier lives to reduce the impact of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension.

Compatriots and friends,

The year 2013 will mark the centenary of the Natives Land Act of 1913, which took away 87 percent of the land from the African people.

The Constitution requires that the State must realise the restitution of land rights for those who were dispossessed by the 1913 law.

We have only distributed 8% of the 30% target of land redistribution for 2014 that we set ourselves. The process is slow and tedious and there is general agreement that the willing buyer- willing seller option has not been the best way to address this question.

That is why we have introduced a new policy framework, the Green Paper on Land Reform.

We urge the public to participate in the process of improving land redistribution and reform to reverse the impact of the 1913 Act.

Honourable Speaker,

Compatriots,

On economic transformation, we are amending the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act [PDF]. The amendments amongst other things, establish a statutory Commission that would deal with non-compliance and circumvention.

The proposed law will also criminalise fronting and other forms of empowerment misrepresentation.

With regards to issues of disability, we have directed all government departments to ensure that we meet the target we set several years ago of having 2% of people employed in the Public Service to be disabled persons.

We are also working towards a Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, to promote compliance in both government and the private sector and to provide for sanctions in the case of non-compliance.

Meanwhile, the NEDLAC Process on the Atypical Forms of Employment and Labour Broking has now been completed.

Government seeks to eliminate all forms of abusive practices inherent in labour broking, in order to strengthen the protection of vulnerable workers. We trust that common ground will be found this year on this matter.

Compatriots,

In 2009 we made a commitment to accelerate the fight against crime and corruption.

The crime statistics for the period 2010/2011 indicate that our country witnessed a decline of 5% in the number of reported serious crimes compared to the previous year.

We will however, not become complacent. We are continuing to implement our programmes of making South Africans feel safe and to be safe.

We also continue to improve the performance of the state in various ways, including the fight against corruption.

The Multi-Agency Working Group on procurement led by the National Treasury, SARS and the Financial Intelligence Centre is reviewing the entire state procurement system to ensure better value for money from state spending.

Initiatives include the vetting of supply chain personnel in government departments.

To further improve security, the Department of Home Affairs, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the banking industry, to roll out the online fingerprint verification system in all participating banks, to assist in fraud prevention and detection.

Compatriots and friends,

We are working with various provinces to improve governance, systems and administration.

These include Gauteng to improve health service delivery, the Free State on transport and roads and Limpopo to improve governance and financial administration in five departments, including the provincial treasury.

We welcome the launch of Corruption Watch by COSATU, as well as the recent agreement between government and business to implement anti-corruption programmes.

These interventions will complement the work of government in combating corruption.

Compatriots and friends,

As part of promoting social cohesion, this year we will undertake and continue many heritage projects.

Museums and centres to be unveiled will include the 1980 Matola Raid museum in Maputo, the Ncome museum in KwaZulu-Natal, phase 2 of the Freedom Park museum and the Steve Biko heritage centre in Ginsberg in King Williamstown.

We have also prioritised the homes and graves of former ANC Presidents and other national heroes including Thomas Maphikela, Lillian Ngoyi, Walter and Albertina Sisulu, Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge, Robert Sobukwe and others.

Memorial sites to be prioritised include that of the Pondo Revolt, the sites of the Frontier Wars, the 1913 revolt by African women in the Free State, the 1957 anti-pass revolt by women in Zeerust, the Rocklands Civic Centre in Mitchells Plein where the United Democratic Front was formed and the Gugulethu Seven monument in Cape Town.

We are also in the process of purchasing and rehabilitating the Winnie Mandela house in Brandfort, the Dr. Moroka house in Thaba Nchu and the Bram Fischer house in Westdene.

Additional projects include the launch of the Dube Tradeport and the unveiling of the statue of John Dube at King Shaka International Airport next month and renaming the Kings House presidential residence in Durban after Dr Dube.

The Presidential Guest House in Pretoria will be named after Mr Sefako Makgatho and the Diplomatic Guest House in Pretoria after the late prolific diplomat, Mr Johnny Makatini.

Government will also table the National Traditional Affairs Bill which makes provision for the recognition of the Khoi-San communities, their leadership and structures.

It is important to remember that the Khoi-San people were the most brutalised by colonialists who tried to make them extinct, and undermined their language and identity. As a free and democratic South Africa today, we cannot ignore to correct the past.

I discussed this matter extensively with the Khoi-San community when I met with them in Cape Town last year and we agreed to work together to redress the injustices of the past.

Compatriots,

Next year 2013, the seat of government, the majestic Union Buildings, will mark 100 years of existence and planning will start this year to mark the centenary.

Fellow South Africans,

We must perform better in sports this year! Our star performer, Oscar Pistorius has set the standard for the year by winning the 2012 Laureus Sportsman of the Year with a Disability Award. Congratulations for this achievement.

We also congratulate the national women's soccer team Banyana Banyana for qualifying for the London Olympics for the first time. With our support, they will do well.

We have been given the honour to host the Africa Cup of Nations next year, replacing Libya as they are unable to do so.

Compatriots,

Allow me to use this opportunity to extend heartiest congratulations and good wishes to Mama Rebecca Kotane, wife of former ANC treasurer general, Moses Kotane and SACP general secretary, who will turn 100 years old on Sunday the 12th of February.

The Young Men's Guild of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, *Amadodana aseWesile*, is also celebrating 100 years this year.

Another centenary celebration is that of *Omama Besililo* of the United Congregational Church of South Africa.

We wish them all successful celebrations.

Compatriots,

We have outlined a busy infrastructure implementation programme for now until 2014 and beyond.

I would like to appeal to all our people to join hands as they always do, as we deal decisively with the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Nobody will do this for us, it is in our hands. And we are all equal to the task.

As we get back to work tomorrow, let us internalise the words of ANC Women's League founding president Charlotte Maxeke who said in her Presidential address to the National Council of African Women.

"This work is not for yourselves — kill that spirit of self, and do not live above your people, but live with them. If you can rise, bring someone with you".

I thank you.

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