



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2026 SONA

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AND RESOURCE
MATTERS (IRM)
CLUSTER**

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE
2026 STATE OF THE
NATION ADDRESS:
IRM CLUSTER**

16 FEBRUARY 2026

**PARLIAMENTARY
RESEARCH UNIT (PRU)**

WWW.PARLIAMENT.GOV.ZA



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2026 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS: INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND RESOURCE MATTERS CLUSTER

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs	4
3. Public Service and Administration	6
4. Agriculture	8
5. Tourism	10
6. Land Reform and Rural Development	12
7. Forestry, Fisheries and Environment.....	13
8. Water and Sanitation	15

1. Introduction

President Ramaphosa delivered his State of the Nation Address (SONA) during a joint sitting of the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) on 12 February 2026. The 2026 SONA reflected the following priority areas for the Intergovernmental and Resource Matters Cluster:

- ❖ **Build an ethical, capable and developmental State with committed, honest and skilled public servants:** This will be achieved through measures such as professionalising the Public Service, enforcing ethics and accountability and preventing departments in all spheres of Government from re-hiring public servants facing or undergoing disciplinary action.
- ❖ **Improve local government performance:** A far-reaching overhaul is underway to address the root causes of dysfunction in many municipalities. This includes the revision of the White Paper on Local Government, which reimagines the way local government works to address the complex and fragmented nature of the current system. In addition, a new R54 billion incentive for metros to reform their water, sanitation and electricity services will be implemented.
- ❖ **Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living:** Since most of the extremely poor reside in rural areas, more focus should be placed on rural areas. Government has declared the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak a national disaster to mobilise all necessary capabilities within the State to address the issue. It will also establish a task team consisting of farmer organisations and experts, working together with the Minister of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture, to provide the President with monthly progress reports in dealing with the pandemic.
- ❖ **Climate resilience and adaptation:** Respond to extreme weather events and strengthen resilience, including support for areas affected by recent flooding in Limpopo and Mpumalanga. The floods have been classified a national disaster to prioritise funding for rebuilding damaged homes, schools, clinics and infrastructure.
- ❖ **Address the national water crisis:** A national water crisis committee will combine all existing efforts into a single coordinating body and deploy technical experts and resources from national government to municipalities facing water challenges. Municipalities that neglect their responsibility to supply water will be held accountable through the Water Services Amendment Bill, which will enable Government to hold water service providers accountable for their performance and withdraw their license if they fail to deliver.

The following departments fall within the purview of the Intergovernmental and Resource Matters Cluster:

- ✓ Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)
- ✓ Department of Public Service and Administration
- ✓ Department of Agriculture
- ✓ Department of Tourism
- ✓ Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
- ✓ Department of Land Reform and Rural Development
- ✓ Department of Water and Sanitation

2. Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

2.1. SONA PRIORITY AREAS FOR COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

- ❖ **Involvement of traditional leaders in local development programmes:** Government proposes more structured cooperation between municipalities and traditional and Khoi-San leadership institutions to enable community engagement and shared problem-solving.
- ❖ **Declaration of national disaster:** Government has classified the floods in Limpopo and Mpumalanga a national disaster. This has enabled national and provincial government to prioritise funding to address the most pressing needs of the people affected.
- ❖ **Local government performance:** A new R54 billion incentive for metropolitan municipalities to reform their water, sanitation and electricity services has been implemented. A far-reaching overhaul is underway to address the root causes of dysfunction in many municipalities. To this end, Government will finalise the revision of the White Paper on Local Government in 2026. The White Paper will reimagine the way local government works and address the complex and fragmented nature of the current system. Proposed changes will take into account the reality that some municipalities can take on more functions than others, which necessitates a differentiated approach to municipal powers and responsibilities.
- ❖ **Improve service delivery:** Government will ensure that senior officials in local government have the required qualifications and are appointed through an independent process free from political interference. Where municipalities fail, the ability of national government to intervene more quickly and to direct corrective measures in the interests of serving South Africans better, will be strengthened. Progress was reported in stabilising eThekweni, while Johannesburg still deals with collapsing infrastructure, financial mismanagement and electricity and water interruptions.

2.2. ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2025 MTBPS

The 2025 MTBPS reported steady progress with structural economic reforms, particularly in electricity, transport and logistics, and bulk water provision. It also indicated that faster implementation of domestic reforms will support expanded growth and investment. This aligns with the 2026 SONA pronouncement that a new R54 billion incentive for metros to reform their water, sanitation and electricity services has been implemented, as well as the finalisation of the revised White Paper on Local Government to overhaul the system in 2026.

2.3. TRACKING PROGRESS WITH KEY SONA 2025 COMMITMENTS AND/OR PRIORITIES

2025 SONA COMMITMENTS/PRIORITIES	PROGRESS
An extensive consultation process will be undertaken to develop an updated White Paper on Local Government, focused on a modern and fit-for-purpose local government system.	The revised White Paper on Local Government will be finalised in 2026.

The funding model for municipalities will be reviewed, as many municipalities do not have a viable and sustainable revenue base.	An overhaul is reportedly underway to address the root causes of dysfunction in many municipalities.
Work with traditional leaders will continue in the implementation of local development programmes.	More structured cooperation between municipalities and traditional and Khoi-San leadership institutions has been proposed to enable community engagement and shared problem-solving.
Support to municipalities that require assistance will be expanded, drawing on the lessons of the Presidential eThekweni Working Group.	Government has introduced a new R54 billion incentive for metros to reform their water, sanitation and electricity services. Government has already laid criminal charges against 56 municipalities that have failed to meet their obligations.

2.4. KEY AREAS FOR PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

- ❖ **Improving the performance of municipalities:** Section 151(4) of the Constitution compels national and provincial governments to use legislative and other means to support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs and to exercise their powers. It will be important to track progress on efforts to improve capacity building for officials, infrastructure maintenance and development, and interventions implemented in terms of Sections 100 and 139 of the Constitution. It is also critical to ensure that departments provide sufficient support to local government and only intervene as a last resort. Ongoing oversight to ensure adequate consequence management in local government remains critical to addressing poor municipal performance.
- ❖ **Progress on the updated White Paper on Local Government:** Progress on the updated White Paper on Local Government, as well as the review of the funding model of municipalities, should be monitored and followed closely.
- ❖ **Progress of the eThekweni and Johannesburg Working Groups:** A briefing may be requested on the lessons learnt through the Presidential eThekweni Working Group, as these could prove useful in duplicating success for the Johannesburg Working Group.
- ❖ **Involvement of traditional leaders:** Parliament should oversee ongoing efforts to ensure the involvement of traditional leaders in the implementation of local development programmes.



3. Public Service and Administration

3.1. SONA PRIORITY AREAS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

- ❖ **Build an ethical, capable and developmental State with committed, honest and skilled public servants:** This will be achieved through measures such as professionalising the Public Service, enforcing ethics and accountability and preventing the re-hiring of public servants facing or undergoing disciplinary action.
- ❖ **Professionalising the public service:** Government has passed significant legislation to professionalise the Public Service. This includes the Public Service Amendment Bill, which aims to protect key public service appointments from political interference. It also aims to ensure that capable and qualified people are appointed to senior positions, based on merit.
- ❖ **Mandatory lifestyle audits:** In 2025, 93% of all senior public servants across departments complied with mandatory lifestyle audits.
- ❖ **Registry for disciplinary cases:** Government is establishing a central registry for disciplinary cases across all spheres of government to prevent people who are facing or have undergone disciplinary action from being employed elsewhere in the State.

3.2. ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2025 MTBPS

The 2025 MTBPS announced increased allocations to enhance public administration and implement measures to combat corruption. This aligns with the 2026 SONA commitment to building an ethical, capable and developmental state through efforts such as professionalising the public service, mandatory lifestyle audits for senior public servants and the establishment of a central registry for disciplinary cases to prevent the State from re-hiring public servants facing or undergoing disciplinary action.

3.3. TRACKING PROGRESS WITH KEY SONA 2025 COMMITMENTS AND/OR PRIORITIES

2025 SONA COMMITMENTS/PRIORITIES	PROGRESS
<p>The Public Service Commission (PSC) will play a stronger role in the recruitment and appointment of senior managers in Departments, such as DGs and CEOs of State-Owned Entities.</p>	<p>The PSC plays a critical oversight and advisory role in the recruitment of senior management. Following the approval of the National Framework towards the Professionalization of the Public Sector, the PSC is expected to play an even more strategic role in advancing public service reform, particularly in relation to appointments, ethics, professionalism, oversight and accountability within public administration. In line with commitments made during the 2025 SONA, the Commission has accelerated the establishment of a database of technical experts to serve on high-level selection committees responsible for appointing Accounting Officers and Chief Executive Officers across government departments and public entities. The purpose of this database is to strengthen the credibility, objectivity and quality of senior appointments in the public sector. By ensuring that</p>

	selection panels include subject matter experts, candidates can be rigorously assessed on their competence and technical capabilities. This approach reinforces merit-based appointments and reduces the risk of political influence. ¹
The identity system will be digitised as part of Government's initiative to improve access to services.	The Department of Home Affairs will launch the digital identity system in 2026 to enable safe and secure use of digital services through the MyMzansi platform.

3.4. KEY AREAS FOR PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

- ❖ **Digital identity system:** The main objective of the digital identity system is to improve access to services for citizens, without having to visit government offices or complete manual forms. Parliament needs to monitor the roll-out of the system with a view to assessing whether it achieves the stated purpose of improving access to services for all citizens.
- ❖ **Professionalisation of the Public Service:**
 - **Registry for disciplinary cases** - The registry for disciplinary cases is important to ensure that public servants dismissed or accused of misconduct in one department are not re-hired by another department, thereby promoting accountability and contributing towards professionalization of the public service. Parliament should consider requesting the Department of Public Service and Administration to provide timeframes for the establishment of the Registry, with a view to overseeing its implementation.
 - **Public Service Amendment Bill** - Whilst the Public Service Amendment Bill [B13-2023] was passed by both Houses of Parliament, the President has not assented to it at the time of writing. The Bill constitutes a key component of professionalizing the public service, as it provides the legal and structural framework to ensure that public servants are appointed, managed and held accountable in a professional and non-partisan manner. Parliament needs to monitor promulgation of the Bill, with a view to overseeing implementation once it comes into operation.



¹ Ngoepe J. (2026)

4. Agriculture

4.1. SONA PRIORITY AREAS FOR AGRICULTURE

- ❖ **Farmer Support:** Government will recruit 10 000 new extension officers to support farmers and improve agricultural productivity.
- ❖ **Biosecurity (Foot and Mouth Disease):**
 - Confirmed the roll-out of mass vaccination of the national herd of 14 million cattle over the next 12 months.
 - Government will establish a task team (consisting of farmer organisations and experts, working together with the Minister of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture) that will provide the President with monthly progress reports in dealing with the pandemic.
 - Government has declared the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak a national disaster to mobilise all necessary capabilities within the State to address the issue.

4.2. ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2025 MTBPS

The 2025 MTBPS stated that measures would be introduced that seek to safeguard food security and trade by addressing bio-security threats, including foot and mouth disease (FMD). Moreover, it committed Government to providing cohesive support to smallholder and subsistence farmers by merging the Ilima/Letsema projects grant and the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) grant from 2026/27. The SONA 2026 announcement on FMD aptly reflects the extent to which the outbreak of the disease has escalated since the initial reported outbreaks in 2021, with recent reports indicating that the disease has spread to all nine provinces (confirmed cases). Given the public health, food security, and economic impact concerns, it is most likely that there will be a need for further budgetary resource allocation.

4.3. TRACKING PROGRESS WITH KEY SONA 2025 COMMITMENTS AND/OR PRIORITIES

2025 SONA COMMITMENTS/PRIORITIES	PROGRESS
Expand the agricultural sector	SONA 2026 confirmed that the agricultural sector is the second largest exporter of citrus fruit in the world.
Farmer Support	SONA 2026 announced that the Blended Finance Scheme has provided R7.8 billion in innovative funding to black producers. In addition, Government will recruit 10 000 new extension officers to support farmers and improve agricultural productivity.
New export markets for products.	New markets for citrus, avocados, maize, livestock, grapes, and wine have been gained.
Commercial production of hemp and cannabis.	SONA 2026 was silent on the production of hemp and cannabis.

4.4. KEY AREAS FOR PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Parliament should use its oversight function to monitor and oversee:

- ❖ **Farmer support and development programmes:** This remains the cornerstone for expanding the agricultural sector with a strong focus on developing subsistence and small-scale farmers.
- ❖ **Improvement of national biosecurity:** Given the declaration of FMD as a national disaster, it is imperative that a stronger focus is placed on the country's capacity to manufacture vaccines through the Agricultural Research Council. Whilst there are some 'green shoots' in this regard, there needs to be considerable resource allocation for the construction of the Biosafety Level 3 (BSL3) facility at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research (OVR) Institute. Moreover, there is an urgent need to implement a full Livestock Identification and Traceability System (LITS) to implement effective movement control of livestock. Currently, the Council of Science and Innovation and Research (CSIR) has piloted Phase 1 of the LITS that can be further developed for animal registration, movement control, and key event recording. However, this requires further investment to improve LITS by introducing new modules for ear tag management and vaccine traceability into a comprehensive 'System for Agricultural Biosecurity and Epidemiology Research (SABER)', which is currently under development.
- ❖ **Commercial production of hemp and cannabis:** There is a need for Parliament to follow up on progress relating to commercialising production of hemp and cannabis.

5. Tourism

5.1. SONA PRIORITY AREAS FOR TOURISM

- ❖ **Infrastructure development and maintenance:** The success of the travel and tourism sector relies on efficient infrastructure. Government's focus on addressing water infrastructure challenges nationwide is critical for the sector. Towns such as Knysna are well-known tourism destinations and play a critical role in job creation and contributing to the economy.
- ❖ **Promote cultural attractions:** Government will focus on the promotion of unique cultural, historical, and natural attractions that reflect the country's identity. For example, traditional festivals, local crafts, historical sites, and natural landscapes across the country and in rural areas.
- ❖ **Safety and security:** Government will strengthen the criminal justice system and, in the process, ensure the safety of areas for tourists to visit.
- ❖ **Electronic visas:** The Electronic Travel Authorisation system will be extended to all countries requiring a visa to South Africa. This will ensure that applications can be digitally processed within 24 hours.
- ❖ **Regulate small enterprises:** A conducive regulatory environment will be created for small enterprises through the introduction of the Business Licensing Bill and the amendment of the National Credit Act Regulations. This will be beneficial for emerging and existing tourism enterprises.

5.2. ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2025 MTBPS

The 2025 MTBPS stated that Government will focus on simplifying visa applications and implementing an electronic travel authorisation (ETA) system to attract skills, investment, and grow tourism. This aligns with the 2026 SONA commitment to extend the ETA system to all countries requiring a visa to South Africa. The 2025 MTBPS also committed Government to supporting growth-enhancing infrastructure by focusing on mobilising and directing more resources towards infrastructure investments. This aligns with the 2026 SONA commitment to invest in transport and water infrastructure, while strengthening municipal capacity to improve the delivery of basic services.

5.3. TRACKING PROGRESS WITH KEY SONA 2025 COMMITMENTS AND/OR PRIORITIES

2025 SONA COMMITMENTS/PRIORITIES	PROGRESS
Support for emerging small enterprises	Through the Tourism Transformation Fund and Tourism Equity Fund, the Department of Tourism continues to invest in new businesses in the sector. The Department also continues to offer support to emerging and small enterprises through its Incubation Programme.
Infrastructure development and maintenance	To ease access and increase the number of tourist arrivals, South African destinations continue to negotiate for more direct international flights. Examples include the Cape Town Air Access Programme, which, as of 2025, has increased the number of international airlines serving the city

	<p>from 17 to 24. Through its Infrastructure Maintenance programme, the Department of Tourism continues to maintain existing tourism sites and develop new tourism products. Its partnership with the Development Bank of Southern Africa has resulted in more infrastructure sites being completed and operationalised for tourism.</p>
<p>Visa System</p>	<p>The mandate for visa processing resides with the Department of Home Affairs. Through discussions with the Department of Tourism and other stakeholders, Home Affairs launched the Trusted Tour Operator Scheme (TTOS) in 2025. The scheme is designed to streamline travel for groups from India and China. It ensures quicker turnaround for visa processing and, in turn, increases visitor arrivals from these source markets.</p> <p>South Africa continues to introduce visa waivers to other countries to increase inbound travelers. In 2025, visa waivers were extended to countries such as Romania, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Slovakia.</p> <p>In September 2025, the Department of Home Affairs introduced the new Electronic Travel Authorisation system to streamline the application and issuance of visas.</p>

5.4. KEY AREAS FOR PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

- Municipal capacity in responding to the impact of natural hazards such as floods, drought, and fires:** Without the necessary mitigation and adaptation measures in place in coastal areas, rural areas, townships, and urban tourism destinations, the travel and tourism sector is vulnerable to climate variability. Drought, fires, and floods pose significant threats to South Africa’s travel and tourism sector, affecting both built facilities and natural resources. Examples of this include fires in Cape Town, drought challenges in Knysna, and flooding in provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and the Eastern Cape.
- Funding for emerging tourism businesses** through financial tools such as the Tourism Transformation Fund and Tourism Equity Fund. The rigid funding requirements and administrative processes of these funds continue to pose barriers for applicants. More businesses choose not to partake in these opportunities due to the administrative burden they pose.
- Inadequate maintenance of tourism sites** and their inadequate integration into existing tourism routes. An example is Khayelitsha Lookout Hill, a site that was developed for tourism and recreation and has been left to deteriorate. In addition, the opening of eateries and businesses for social events near the facility provides an opportunity for the development of a township tourism product like ‘Soweto’s Vilakazi Street’ in Cape Town. However, deliberate and sustainable investment in township tourism continues to be an afterthought, which is not unique to Cape Town.



6. Land Reform and Rural Development

6.1. SONA PRIORITY AREAS FOR LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ **Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living:** Since most of the extremely poor reside in rural areas, more focus should be placed on rural areas.
- ❖ **Restitution:** Finalise the restitution process for District 6 through the construction of phase 4 houses.
- ❖ **Transformation:** Government will establish a professional State Property Company to transform 88 000 buildings and five million hectares of land owned by the State into professionally managed engines of growth and development. However, in the previous years, Government has made a commitment to release state land for redistribution.

6.2. ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2025 MTBPS

The 2025 MTBPS stated that the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development would expedite the finalisation of outstanding land claims, prioritising older claims. This aligns with SONA 2026, which commits Government to finalising outstanding claims for verified claimants in District 6, through the construction of Phase 4 houses. A total of R500 million is allocated for this purpose.

6.3. TRACKING PROGRESS WITH KEY SONA 2025 COMMITMENTS AND/OR PRIORITIES

2025 SONA COMMITMENTS/PRIORITIES	PROGRESS
Revitalisation of rural roads and bridges. In particular, the building of Mtentu bridge in the Eastern Cape was in progress.	Construction of the bridge is expected to be completed in 2027.
Government will clear backlog of title deeds for subsidised housing, turning homes to assets.	Whilst Government has made progress in handing over title deeds to housing beneficiaries, there was a backlog of 1.2 million title deeds for houses as at the beginning of January 2026.
President Ramaphosa signed the Expropriation Bill into law with the intension of fast-tracking the land reform process.	Although the Expropriation Bill was signed into law by President Ramaphosa, it has not been implemented, as Regulations are not yet finalised. Moreover, there is a need for a compensation policy to guide the implementation of the Act, which has not been completed yet.

6.4. KEY AREAS FOR PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

- ❖ **Rural Infrastructure Development:** Parliament should monitor the construction of roads and bridges in rural areas, especially the completion of Mtentu bridge in the Eastern Cape, as well as their impact on the rural economy.
- ❖ **Expropriation Act No.13 of 2024:** Ensure that regulations for the Act are completed and the Compensation policy is developed to guide the implementation of the Act.
- ❖ **Restitution:** Request an update on progress with the construction of phase 4 houses in District 6 and monitor the quality of the houses and allocation to claimants.

7. Forestry, Fisheries and Environment

7.1. SONA PRIORITY AREAS FOR FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT

- ❖ **Climate resilience and adaptation:** Responding to extreme weather events and strengthening resilience, including support for areas affected by recent catastrophic flooding in Limpopo and Mpumalanga. The floods have been classified a national disaster to prioritise funding for rebuilding damaged homes, schools, clinics and infrastructure.
- ❖ **Green economy, jobs and infrastructure:** Government has committed more than R1 trillion in public investment over three years in infrastructure development and maintenance (including energy, water and transport). Furthermore, more than 2.5 million opportunities have already been created through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, with the Expanded Public Works Programme and the Community Work Programme continuing. These investments and programmes have direct and indirect links to environmental restoration, catchment management, greening of public spaces and other FFE-related work.
- ❖ **Biodiversity, conservation and oceans:** While SONA 2026 does not provide detailed biodiversity-economy or oceans-economy announcements, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) remains responsible for biodiversity and conservation, oceans and coasts, and chemicals and waste. These remain central to achieving climate resilience, protecting ecosystems and supporting sustainable rural and coastal livelihoods.

7.2. ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2025 MTBPS

The 2025 MTBPS and 2025 Budget Review emphasise fiscal consolidation while protecting growth-enhancing infrastructure and green transition spending. It commits Government to investing more than R1 trillion in public infrastructure, including about R156.3 billion for water and sanitation, as well as significant allocations for energy and transport. These sectors are all important for climate resilience and environmental management. This provides the broader fiscal and infrastructure context within which Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (FFE) priorities must be implemented. From the FFE perspective, SONA 2026 aligns with the 2025 MTBPS as it relates to the need to prioritise infrastructure investment (including water and sanitation, which is a driver of growth and resilience); ongoing support for programmes such as the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) that include environmental work; and the requirement for fiscal discipline, which explains why DFFE's baseline grow only modestly and why most new initiatives must be funded through reprioritisation.

7.3. TRACKING PROGRESS WITH KEY SONA 2025 COMMITMENTS AND/OR PRIORITIES

2025 SONA COMMITMENTS/PRIORITIES	PROGRESS
Committed Government to implementing South Africa's Just Energy Transition, mobilising international and domestic investment to meet our carbon-reduction	SONA 2026 reiterates Government's commitment to large-scale infrastructure investment and green-economy reforms as part of the Just Energy Transition, but provides limited detail on DFFE-led ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions.

commitments at a pace and scale the country can afford.	
Undertook to use the public and social employment programmes, especially the Presidential Employment Stimulus and the Social Employment Fund, to create meaningful work and livelihood opportunities and expand these initiatives, particularly for young people.	SONA 2026 reports that more than 2.5 million opportunities have been created through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, with EPWP and the Community Work Programme continuing and including work such as converting dumping sites into parks and community gardens. However, environment-specific job numbers are not disaggregated.
Make sustainable use of the rich abundance of South Africa's earth and natural endowments – including land, minerals and biodiversity – so that the wealth beneath our soil and the ecosystems above it benefit our people.	The 2025 MTBPS and 2025/26 Budget maintain transfers to key biodiversity and climate entities (e.g. SANParks, SANBI, iSimangaliso, SAWS), supporting ongoing conservation and monitoring functions. However, SONA 2026 gives limited specific feedback on the Forestry Master Plan milestones, biodiversity-economy jobs or small-scale fisheries support, suggesting a need for targeted briefings to Parliament on progress, risks and outstanding implementation gaps.

7.4. KEY AREAS FOR PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

- ❖ **Budget-delivery gap under a constrained baseline:** Parliament should use its oversight function to assess whether the DFFE's R9.08 billion allocation and related transfers to entities are sufficient to meet climate change, biodiversity, waste and oceans mandates, given overall fiscal consolidation and rising climate risk.
- ❖ **Climate adaptation financing and disaster resilience:** Parliament should monitor how national infrastructure spending (including R156.3 billion for water and sanitation and more than R1 trillion overall over three years) is being used to build climate resilience, support catchment and ecosystem restoration, and integrate nature-based solutions, particularly in high-risk municipalities.
- ❖ **Sustainability of biodiversity and climate entities:** Parliament should engage SANParks, SANBI, iSimangaliso and the South African Weather Service on how real-term budget pressures affect conservation, climate and weather services, and measures being taken to diversify revenue while maintaining public-interest mandates.
- ❖ **Implementation of the Forestry Master Plan and fisheries transformation:** Parliament should track progress with community and commercial forestry, transformation in forestry and fisheries value chains, support to small-scale fishers, and improvements in monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) to combat illegal logging and fishing.
- ❖ **Waste and circular economy in municipalities:** Parliament should oversee the implementation of national waste and circular-economy policies, particularly in municipalities facing chronic waste and pollution challenges, and assess how these programmes contribute to job creation and improved environmental health.



8. Water and Sanitation

8.1. SONA PRIORITY AREAS FOR WATER AND SANITATION

- ❖ **Accountability and Enforcement Measures:** Municipalities who neglect their responsibility to supply water will be held accountable through the Water Services Amendment Bill, which will enable Government to hold water service providers (primarily local governments) accountable for their performance and withdraw their license. This is important to deter ongoing neglect, limit mismanagement, and enforce a culture of compliance.
- ❖ **Establishment of a National Water Crisis Committee:** A national water crisis committee will combine all existing efforts into a single coordinating body and deploy technical experts and resources from national government to municipalities facing water challenges.
- ❖ **Emergency Stabilisation of Water Supply (Gauteng):** communities across Gauteng and other provinces face persistent outages, which is indicative of deep infrastructure deterioration and governance failure. The Minister of Water and Sanitation and the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs were instructed to attend to the water shortage problem and engage with affected communities.
- ❖ **Infrastructure Reform Incentive for Metros:** A new R54 billion incentive for metropolitan municipalities to reform their water, sanitation and electricity services has been implemented. This intervention is important, since the misuse of water revenue is one of the biggest causes of infrastructure collapse.
- ❖ **Overhaul of Local Government and Water Governance Framework:** A far-reaching overhaul is underway to address the root causes of dysfunction in many municipalities. This includes the revision of the White Paper on Local Government to reimagine the way local government works and address the complex and fragmented nature of the current system. this is important, as municipal dysfunction is the primary driver of service delivery failure nationwide.
- ❖ **Water and Sanitation Infrastructure development and management:** Government will invest more than R156 Billion in water and sanitation infrastructure over the medium term. It reports progress with the construction of projects, such as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II; and the Ntabelanga Dam on the Mzimvubu river in the Eastern Cape. Government is also finalising the establishment of the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency to mobilise funding for and manage the country's water infrastructure.

8.2. ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2025 MTBPS

The MTBPS 2025 highlights a strong, coordinated effort to strengthen South Africa's water and sanitation system through major infrastructure investment, improved governance, and targeted municipal support. It allocates R156.3 billion over the MTEF for water and sanitation infrastructure, alongside increases in regional and local water-services funding and substantial rises in bulk water allocations, such as R61.6 billion in 2025/26 for water-resource and bulk infrastructure. The Review also reinforces institutional reforms, including establishing the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency, developing an independent water economic regulator, and modernising

Private Public Partnership processes, with tailored toolkits for the water sector to improve planning, financing and oversight of large-scale water projects. Additionally, the Review showcases key strategic bulk-water schemes, such as the Lesotho Highlands Phase 2 (R42.1 bn), uMkhomazi (R24 bn) and Olifants Phase 2 (R25 bn), as central to long-term supply security, all backed by strengthened roles for Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) and water boards in raising capital and accelerating delivery. At municipal level, the Review deepens support for water and sanitation service recovery by expanding the equitable share, increasing the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, and introducing a performance-based grant specifically designed to reform water trading entities. This directly addresses financial mismanagement, skills shortages, maintenance backlogs, and operational inefficiencies. Overall, the MTBPS 2025 aligns directly with the priorities outlined in SONA 2026, reinforcing its call for decisive action on water security, municipal turnaround, infrastructure acceleration and stronger accountability across the water and sanitation value chain.

8.3. TRACKING PROGRESS WITH KEY SONA 2025 COMMITMENTS AND/OR PRIORITIES

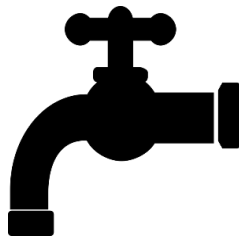
2025 SONA COMMITMENTS/PRIORITIES	PROGRESS
Operation and Maintenance of Water and Sanitation Infrastructure and Establishment of Municipal Water Utilities	National Treasury introduced the Metro Trading Services reform programme in 2025 to incentivise metropolitan municipalities that perform well in managing trading services, such as water and energy. SONA 2026 introduced a new R54 billion incentive to ensure that metros reform their water, sanitation, and electricity systems. Critically, this policy requires that revenues collected from water services be ring-fenced and reinvested into water infrastructure upgrades, including pumps, reservoirs, and pipelines.
Investment in Infrastructure development for water security and economic development	Tangible progress has been recorded in the construction of bulk water infrastructure to improve water access to both rural and urban communities and encourage economic growth. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II; Ntabelanga Dam on Umzimvubu river; and uMkhomazi (Dam) Water Project are currently underway. To this end, the funding for infrastructure development has been increased from R23 billion in 2025 to R156 billion.
Amending legislation to improve water services delivery	The Water Services Amendment Bill was tabled in Parliament in 2025. The Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation is currently conducting public hearings on the Bill.

8.4. KEY AREAS FOR PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

- ❖ **Processing of the Water Services Amendment Bill:** The Bill was introduced in Parliament in 2025. The Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation is currently conducting public hearings on the Bill.
- ❖ **Water shortages in Gauteng:** The Minister of Water and Sanitation and the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs were instructed to attend to the water shortage problem and engage with affected communities. Parliament should monitor

progress in this regard, as well as the establishment and implementation of the Water Crisis Committee.

- ❖ **Monitoring the National Water Crisis Committee:** The establishment of a national water crisis committee creates high-level accountability on the part of water service providers and breaks fragmented, slow municipal responses. Parliament should monitor the establishment and work of the committee.
- ❖ **Progress of criminal cases against 56 municipalities:** Government has introduced a new R54 billion incentive for metros to reform their water, sanitation and electricity services. It has laid criminal charges against 56 municipalities that have failed to meet their obligations. Parliament should oversee implementation of this incentive and monitor the progress of the criminal cases instituted.
- ❖ **Water infrastructure projects:** Government's substantial investment in infrastructure projects and establishment of the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency are important initiatives, as long-term water security and storage capacity are critical to national growth, as is professionalisation and consolidation of the management of water infrastructure. Parliament should monitor and track progress on strategic infrastructure projects, such as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and Mzimvubu Water Project (Ntabelanga Dam), as well as the operationalisation of the Agency.



Sithabiso Buthelezi
Chief Researcher
sibuthelezi@parliament.gov.za

Cluster Researchers

Ester Saptoe
Senior Researcher
esaptoe@parliament.gov.za

Jeanie le Roux
Researcher: CoGTA
jleroux@parliament.gov.za

Nontobeko Qwabe
Researcher: Agriculture
nqwabe@parliament.gov.za

Nondumiso Dumakude
Researcher: Forestry, Fisheries,
Environment
ndumakude@parliament.gov.za

Sisanda Loni
Researcher: Tourism
ssowazi@parliament.gov.za

Tembisa Siyo-Pepeteka
Researcher: Land Reform and Rural
Development
tpepeteka@parliament.gov.za

External contributor

Thomani Manungufala
Content Advisor: Water and Sanitation
tmanungufala@parliament.gov.za

What we do:

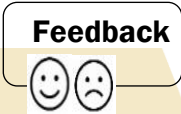
The Research Unit offers research support to individual Members of Parliament, to Committees and to the Houses. Researchers proactively provide:

- ✓ Summaries and analysis of Bills
- ✓ Analysis of the State of the Nation Address (SONA), Budget Votes, Annual Performance Plans, Quarterly Performance and Expenditure Reports, and Annual Reports
- ✓ Briefing papers in support of Committee meetings on topical oversight issues
- ✓ Comparative studies and international best practices
- ✓ Briefing papers to prepare for oversight visits and on-site oversight visit support
- ✓ Papers in support of House debates

On request, researchers will provide briefings and presentations to Committees, as well as research support to individual Members of Parliament.



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



For any comments or feedback, please email Sithabiso Buthelezi
sibuthelezi@parliament.gov.za