



DURBAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY NPC

07/02/2023

COMMENT

SONA 2023- EXPECTATIONS

With the state of the nation address (SONA) looming closer by the day, as the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC, we will be paying close attention to the critical issues that will be hopefully covered by President Cyril Ramaphosa, not only so but we eagerly await the solutions to be presented, the implementation of these solutions and more importantly the timeline.

We hope that the president will cover and not limited to the following issues that we believe are critical, if we are to restore our crippled economy, and work towards recovery:

Build Operate & Transfer

Post the presidents last address to the nation, he referred to the Build, Operate and Transfer model. The Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry seeks clear timelines and plans for the build operate and transfer model. We believe the private sector is readily available to invest in large infrastructure projects that will stimulate economic growth and solve South Africa's unemployment, poverty and inequality challenges.

Load Shedding

Eskom is a critical state infrastructure and cannot be left to operate in disarray and fall into mismanagement under our watch. Load shedding is placing added pressure on businesses and the overall economy. For example, blackouts because of Eskom's unit breakdowns are resulting in a number of operational challenges across sectors nationally. Whilst President Cyril Ramaphosa has addressed the issue of Eskom previously, we have not felt a tangible solution on the ground. As organised business, we are hoping to see practical and immediate interventions presented by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

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President: PSS Maharaj | Deputy President: M Lethoko | 1st Vice President: JD Bhana | Vice President Finance: BF Scott | Immediate Past President: NG Ward
Non-Executive Directors: TG Malishe, MM Khumalo, TS Cibane, WH Pelsler, KE Macllwaine
Executive Directors: PD Phili (CEO), MJ Raftery (CFO) and ZL Khomo (CGO)

Water, Sanitation & Infrastructure Issues

We continue to be deeply concerned about Durban's water and sanitation crisis. Damaged water infrastructure, sewage leaks and the ongoing closure of Durban's beaches are creating a poor perception of Durban. Furthermore, it has the potential to affect the tourism sector and its entire value chain negatively. The pace of infrastructure restoration and services recovery is slow and causing immeasurable damage to the ecosystem and particularly the tourism sector. While efforts by government are appreciated and the Chamber and its members lend a hand, the internal systems of government have not been helpful. Following the engagement, we had with President Cyril Ramaphosa in May 2022 we expect the SONA to highlight and communicate a believable plan with timelines and resource commitments to restore critical infrastructure.

Port Operations

Addressing the challenges and operational inefficiencies at the Ports is a major step towards improving South Africa's export competitiveness. We are optimistic that the prioritization of the Ports will yield positive economic spin-offs for the local economy. The ocean economy and the maritime sector are considered to offer several benefits to the City and South Africa in the future. Issues of congestion and inefficiencies require both the private and public sectors to work together to resolve.

Crime and Corruption

A concern is the crime and grime that exists in Durban's inner city. Most of the work that needs to be done in the area has to do with urban management for the crime and grime, security, cleanliness, bad buildings, and rough sleepers. The current status is sufficient motivation for the City and the Province of KwaZulu-Natal to recognise its reputation is open to destruction if these issues are not adequately addressed. Furthermore, we are seeing an increase in illegal immigrants which is impacting formal businesses that are compliant. We need to see action taken by national government to deal with these matters.

As organised business, we hope President Cyril Ramaphosa introduces performance management principles, processes, and procedures to help tackle corruption. What is missing, in the case of corruption, is clarity on the remedial action and punitive consequences. Until the criminals suffer the consequences of their unlawful behaviour through their acts of economic sabotage, then there will be no real change in the status quo.

<ENDS>

About the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC

Founded in 1856, the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC is the largest member-based metropolitan chamber in Southern Africa. We represent approximately 3,000 businesses in eThekweni and beyond, ranging from multinationals to corporates and SMMEs. Since 2019, we also represent 54,000 informal sector businesses through their business associations. Policy and advocacy are at the heart of our work and we assist members with securing trade and investment opportunities locally and internationally, providing business advisory services (CIPC, Certificate of Origin, ITC checks, HR consultancy and more) across a broad spectrum of sectors, engaging thought leadership through forum webinars and other networking events, sharing business information through digital platforms, and also sourcing business insights through occasional questionnaires. The Durban Chamber advocates and influences policy decisions that affect the interests of business (tax legislation, import and export regulations and more), offering member benefits and providing information relevant to business decision-making. As a business-based and member-focused organisation, our strategic purpose is to help create a conducive economic and business environment to facilitate and promote economic growth in the region in partnership with key stakeholders.

For more info, contact the Durban Chamber on 031 335 1000 or info@durbanchamber.co.za

Our website is www.durbanchamber.co.za

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