

Ramaphosa's many words speak of little insight

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State of the Nation Address: Ramaphosa's many words speak of little insight

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Solidarity today said in reaction to Pres Ramaphosa's second State of the Nation Address this year that it is clear that the ANC's inherent inability to successfully govern South Africa is epitomised in the President's pipe dream of an African Utopia.

This follows after Pres Ramaphosa, when referring to the seven priorities government will be focussing on, only mentioned that state-owned entities (SOEs) should be strengthened to deliver on their mandate and to build an ethical state in which there is no place for corruption and plundering of public money. However, no mention was made of how those guilty of shockingly squandering South Africans' tax money would be brought to book.

According to Monica Mynhardt, a researcher at the Solidarity Research Institute (SRI), Pres Ramaphosa sidestepped important issues by making empty promises. "The President did not come forward with any definite plans to turn ailing entities such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), South African Airways (SAA) and Denel around; on the contrary, he did not even once refer to those state-owned entities."

In a feverish attempt to keep power in government's hands, the President announced that an absurd bail-out of R230 billion would be given to Eskom over the next ten years. A bail-out without real change and actual plans does not mean much. Promises about unbundling Eskom were made earlier, but this proposal seems to have died a silent death as no mention was made of it in this State of the Nation address. "In spite of the fact that we live in a country where the government is unable to keep the lights on, the president dreams of high-speed trains and a technologically advanced economy," Mynhardt said.

Another perturbing issue is the government's actual plans to have the National Health Insurance (NHI) approved by the sixth parliament despite justified opposition from all quarters. The same goes for the land reform issue. Mynhardt also said that the government's plans to accelerate land reform in rural and urban areas leave South Africans and foreign investors uncertain about the future of food security and property rights. "The President shockingly contradicted himself when he emphasised that accelerated economic growth, among other things, required a clear property rights regime. However, it is absurd of the President to expect agriculture to play a key role in economic growth amid the fact that this sector is the one suffering the most because of the concept of expropriation without compensation."

"One highlight of the State of the Nation Address was the President's assurance that the Reserve Bank would remain independent, but in light of the empty promises and the devastating ideologies in which the ANC is rooted, it would be extremely naïve to believe that the ANC will surrender at any time soon the centralised power it had acquired with so much effort," Mynhardt concluded.

Issued by Monica Mynhardt, Researcher, Solidarity Research Institute, 20 June 2019