



Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference

17 February 2018

STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference heartily welcomes the State of the Nation Address delivered by His Excellency the President Cyril Ramaphosa. We are particularly happy with the emphasis on Unity, Ethical Leadership, and the total equality of all citizens. The intention to reduce poverty and youth unemployment, improve education access for the children of the poor, deconcentrated effort on greater employment will certainly bring hope to all South Africans.

The emphasis on the reduction of corruption in all its forms can only be welcomed. The streamlining of government services, the placement of State-Owned Enterprises in safer hands, the investigation of state capture, the careful appointment of reliable leaders for the National Prosecuting Authorities and Revenue Services will allow for a more efficient government.

The State President's speech showed awareness of the many areas of national life which need investment and nourishment. We are happy that more lands will be distributed and made available to our people. That the troubled mining sector will receive attention can only be a benefit for all. The idea of engaging and enabling many more people to participate in the economy through small business investment, the highlighting of manufacturing and industrialisation, the establishment of a basic minimum wage from May 1st are all to be applauded.

The setting out of a generous and enlightened national plan is only the first step. We now all look to implementation. But at least, we now have a benchmark against which we can make assessment of our national progress. The first step in realizing our hopes will become visible in the appointment of cabinet ministers and in the budget speech of next Friday. Let us hope that free tertiary education for first year can be financed while leaving money for the other necessary investments.

We welcome the State of the Nation Address. Yet so much depends on stable family units which are the basis of all society. If we are not trustworthy within our families can we be trusted anywhere else?

Yours in Christ,

+William Slattery OFM
Archbishop of Pretoria