

- The public can participate in the State of the Nation Address as invited guests of Parliament as part of the Civil Guard of Honour, Junior Guard of Honour or Eminent persons. Eminent persons are nominated by the Speaker of each Provincial Legislature and are nominated on the basis of their contribution to society.
- If you are an educator, you may be interested in the priorities set by government for Basic and Higher Education and the percentage of the budget allocated for educational needs.
- If you are unemployed, you may want to know how government intends to prioritise job creation, support young entrepreneurs and small business initiatives.
- If you are a learner, you may be focused on government's immediate and long-term plans to make education more accessible to all learners.
- If you are a pensioner, or if you have a disability you may be concerned with how much money has been set aside for social grants.
- If you are a worker, you will be checking if your taxes are going to be increased or decreased.

The theme, '**Celebrating 20 years of the Constitution and 20 years since the establishment of the NCOP**', speaks to all South Africans and our rights and responsibilities. Citizens have the right to information and the responsibility to be informed and to participate in the determination of the nation's needs. Citizens also have the responsibility to hold government accountable for their deliverables through the elected representatives in Parliament.

FAST FACTS

- The State of the Nation Address is divided into three parts. The first is the important public participation role in the ceremony when the Civil Guard of Honour welcomes the President and his guests as they walk along the red carpet. This is followed by a state ceremonial, which includes a 21-gun salute and the South African Air Force flypast and finally the official address by the President.
- Members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) line the route that the President takes to Parliament.
- The Military Guard of Honour participates in the ceremony and the military band plays South Africa's national anthem.
- In a general election year, two State of the Nation Addresses are delivered.
- The State of the Nation Address is one of the rare occasions where the three arms of State, namely the Executive represented by the President, Deputy President and Ministers; the Judiciary, represented by the country's Chief Justice and the Judge Presidents; and the Legislature, represented by the Members of Parliament gather in one place.
- The provincial and local spheres of government are also represented.

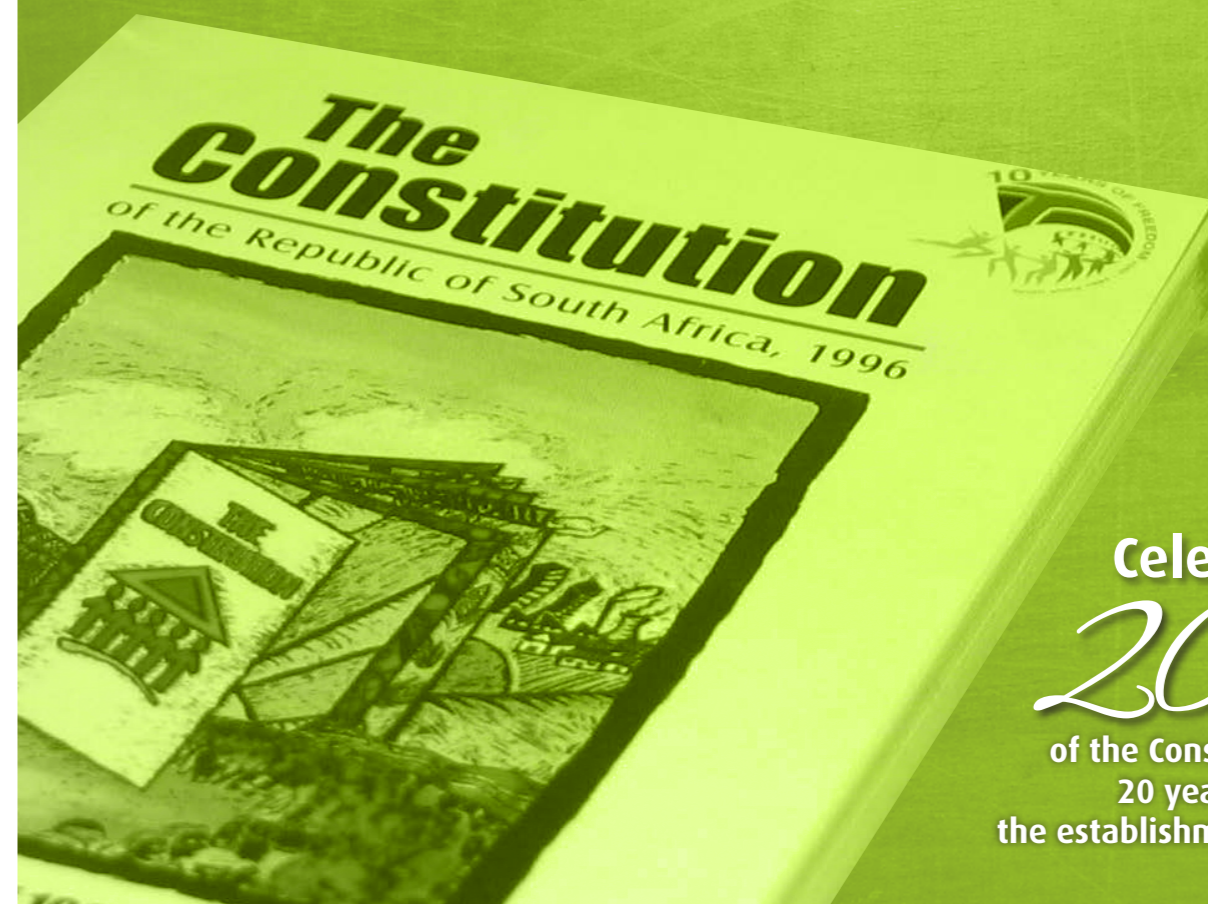
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2017 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS



Celebrating
20 years
of the Constitution and
20 years since
the establishment of the NCOP

What is the State of the Nation Address?

The State of the Nation Address is commonly known as **the Opening of Parliament**. It is an annual address to the nation by the President of the Republic of South Africa as the Head of State which focuses on the current political and socio-economic state of the nation. The event is hosted by Parliament and is one of the rare occasions where the three arms of state (Legislature, Executive and Judiciary) come together in one place.

When is the State of the Nation Address happening?

The State of the Nation Address (or SONA) will be delivered to a joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament (National Assembly and National Council of Provinces) on 9 February 2017 at 7pm. The State of the Nation Address will be broadcast live from 5pm on: SABC radio stations, SABC TV, DSTV Channel 408, eNCA and ANN7.

What is the theme for the 2017 State of the Nation Address?

The 2017 theme is **Celebrating 20 years of the Constitution and 20 years since the establishment of the NCOP**. The Constitution was signed into law by former President Nelson Mandela in Sharpeville on 10 December 1996 and came into operation on 4 February 1997. It is the highest law in the land and contains 14 chapters guiding the rules and functions of our democracy.

The constitutional mandate of NCOP, as its name suggests, is to represent the interest of provinces at national level. The NCOP has over the last 20 years played a significant role in holding the executive to account, processing section 76 legislation, ensuring public access to Parliament through the promotion of public participation, ensuring that Parliament's programme of Taking Parliament to the People reaches all provinces, ensuring feedback to the people on government undertakings and monitoring the role of municipalities with regard to service delivery at local government level.

What happens during the State of the Nation Address?

- The President sets out government's key policy objectives and deliverables for the year ahead;
- It highlights the achievements and challenges experienced over the past year and maps the year ahead;
- It covers wide-ranging political, economic and social matters and considers the general state of South Africa;
- It deliberates on South Africa's domestic affairs as well as its continental and international relations; and
- The full address is recorded in the Minutes of Proceedings.

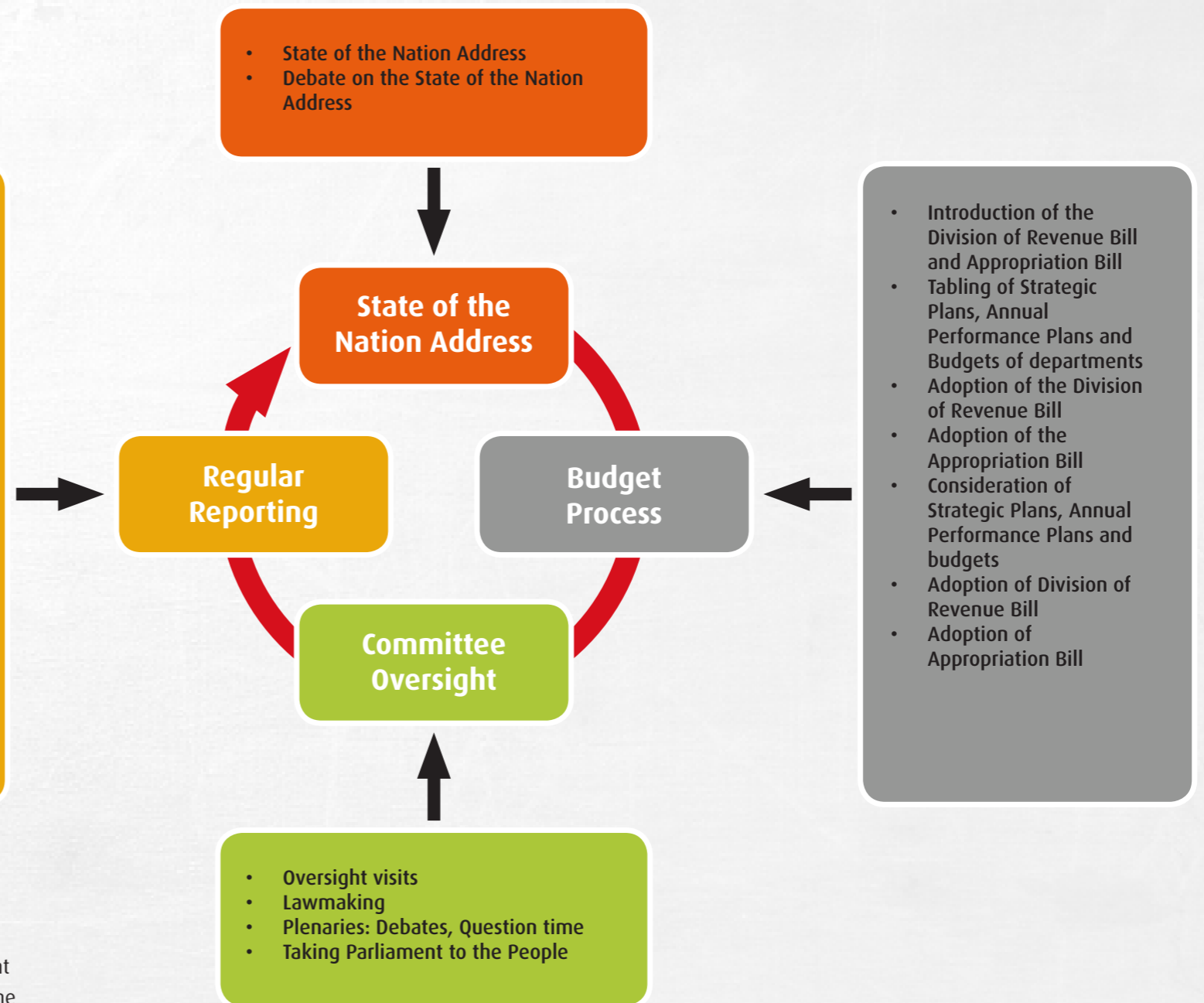
What happens after the State of the Nation Address?

Political parties have an opportunity to debate, comment and raise questions on matters addressed in the President's speech during a debate on the President's State of the Nation Address. This debate usually takes place over two days in a joint sitting at Parliament. This year the debate is scheduled for 14 – 15 February 2017. The President will have the opportunity to reply to the debate on 16 February 2017.

What is the significance of the State of the Nation Address?

The State of the Nation Address forms an important part of Parliament's oversight function. Parliament is mandated by

- Tabling of Annual Reports and Financial Statements
- Consideration of Annual Reports and Financial Statements
- Budget Recommendations and Review Reports
- Submission of MTBPS and Revised Fiscal Framework and tabling of Adjustment Budget
- Consideration of Revised Fiscal Framework and Adjustment Budget
- Adoption of the Revised Fiscal Framework
- Adoption of the Adjustment Budget



the Constitution to oversee and monitor all organs of state including those at provincial and local level in order to:

- Make government accountable for taxpayers' money
- Make operations more transparent and
- To increase public trust in government

The cyclical link between the State of the Nation Address, the Budget and the Oversight function of Parliament

- The State of the Nation Address outlines government's priorities for the year;
- The Minister of Finance allocates the Budget in line with the priorities outlined in the State of Nation Address including regular reporting; and
- Parliament conducts oversight to ensure that government delivers on the priorities set out in the State of the Nation Address and checks that allocated funds are spent accordingly.

The State of the Nation Address, the Budget, Oversight and You

The State of the Nation Address and the Budget is relevant to all South African citizens. It addresses the needs and priorities of our nation and the spending of money for and on behalf of our nation – the people of South Africa.