



ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA ON THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE

10 JUNE 2025

My Fellow South Africans,

Today, I wish to address you about the National Dialogue, an initiative that has been in discussion by a number of leaders in our country and many other people for some time now.

This initiative has been gathering great support and enthusiasm since it was proposed last year. It has been endorsed by a wide range of formations across society.

Over the last few months, we have been engaged in discussions with various entities on the purpose and the form of the National Dialogue.

In the wake of these consultations, there is broad agreement that given the challenges our country is facing at the moment, we should convene the National Dialogue.

The idea of holding a dialogue is not a new concept in our country. In many ways having dialogues is part of our DNA as a nation.

At every important moment in the history of our country, we have come together as a nation to confront our challenges and forge a path into the future in dialogue with one another.

Through dialogue we were able to deal with the challenges that the apartheid system caused in our country and achieved peace and overcame violence.

We established a democracy and ended apartheid.

Following the negotiations process, we used dialogue to start building a united nation where once there had only been conflict and division.

We achieved all this because we came together in dialogue to discuss our difficulties, our concerns, our hopes and our aspirations as a people.

For more than 30 years, we have worked together to realise the promise of our democratic Constitution.

We have made great strides as a nation, expanding freedom, deepening democracy and building a better life for millions.

Yet we face persistent challenges.

Poverty, unemployment and inequality are deep wounds that prevent us from reaching our full potential as a nation and as a country.

Millions of people are under-employed and unemployed. Many of those who work earn wages that cannot sustain them or their families.

Crime, gender-based violence and corruption are prevalent across our society.

We are therefore called upon at this moment to direct all our efforts to build a thriving, inclusive economy that creates jobs and opportunities.

We are called upon to build safer communities and to create a better future for our children.

We are also called upon to give all sectors of our society – men and women, young and old, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI community, and urban and rural people – a voice to determine how we address the problems of today and build the South Africa we want for future generations.

That is why we have agreed to convene an inclusive National Dialogue.

The dialogue will be a people-led, society-wide process to reflect on the state of our country in order for us to reimagine our future.

The National Dialogue is a chance for all South Africans, from all walks of life, to come together and help shape the next chapter of our democracy.

Through the National Dialogue, we seek a shared vision of what it means to be a South African and develop a new national ethos and common value system.

It is an opportunity to forge a new social compact for the development of our country, a compact that will unite all South Africans, with clear responsibilities for different stakeholders, government, business, labour, civil society, men and women, communities and citizens.

It is anticipated that the National Dialogue will drive progress towards our Vision 2030 and lay the foundation for the next phase of South Africa's National Development Plan.

The National Dialogue itself is not an event.

Rather, it will be a participatory process that unfolds in phases, from local consultations and sectoral engagements to provincial and national gatherings.

In my capacity as the Head of State, I will be calling a National Convention on Friday, the 15th of August 2025.

This National Convention will represent the diversity of the South African nation.

The first National Convention will set the agenda for the National Dialogue.

It will be a representative gathering, bringing together government, political parties, civil society, business, labour, traditional leaders, religious leaders, cultural workers, sports organisations, women, youth and community voices, among others.

Through their various political, social and other formations, in their workplaces, in places of worship, communities, villages and sites of learning, South Africans will in the months following the National Convention be encouraged to be in dialogue to define our nation's path into the future.

The views, concerns and proposals that will emerge from this conversation will be brought together at a second National Convention, that is planned to be held in the beginning of next year.

This second National Convention will reinforce our shared values and adopt a common vision and programme of action for our country into the future.

We expect that the National Convention will finalise a compact that outlines the roles and responsibilities of all South Africans.

To guide and champion the National Dialogue, I am appointing an Eminent Persons Group.

These are leading figures in our society, reflecting the great diversity of our nation, with a proven commitment to the advancement of social cohesion and nation-building.

The members of the Eminent Persons Group are:

- Dr Brigalia Bam, former Independent Electoral Commission Chairperson,
- Mr Robbie Brozin, entrepreneur and business person,
- Judge Edwin Cameron, former Constitutional Court judge,
- Mr Manne Dipico, former Northern Cape Premier,
- Dr Desiree Ellis, Banyana Banyana coach and football legend,
- Ms Ela Gandhi, peace activist and stalwart,
- Prof Nomboniso Gasa, researcher and rural activist,
- Mr Bobby Godsell, business leader,
- Dr John Kani, award-winning actor,
- Mr Siya Kolisi, Springbok captain and world champion,
- Ms Mia le Roux, Miss South Africa 2024,
- His Grace Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane, leader of the Zion Christian Church,
- His Grace Bishop Engenas Lekganyane, leader of the St Engenas Zion Christian Church,
- The Most Reverend Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town,
- Prof Tinyiko Maluleke, Chairperson of the National Planning Commission,
- Dr Barbara Masekela, poet, educator and stalwart,
- Ms Lindiwe Mazibuko, former Member of Parliament,
- Mr Roelf Meyer, former Minister and constitutional negotiator,
- Ms Gcina Mhlope, storyteller, writer and actor,
- Ms Nompandolo Mkhathshwa, student activist and former Member of Parliament,
- Ms Kgothatso Montjane, Grand Slam tennis champion,
- Prof Harry Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, former activist and educationist,
- Mr Bheki Ntshalintshali, unionist and former COSATU General Secretary,
- Hosi Phyllia Nwamitwa, traditional leader,
- Kgosi Thabo Seatlholo, chairperson of the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders,
- Dr Gloria Serobe, business leader,
- Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, founder of the Gift of the Givers,
- Prof Derrick Swartz, academic,
- Ms Lorato Trok, author and early literacy expert,
- Mr Sibusiso Vilane, mountaineer and adventurer,
- Mr Siyabulela Xuza, award-winning rocket scientist.

UBaba uShembe uNyazi LweZulu has also been invited to join the Eminent Persons Group, but, as he is travelling, has not yet been able to confirm his availability.

I am grateful to each of these South African patriots who have made themselves available to act as the guarantors of an inclusive, constructive and credible process.

An Inter-Ministerial Committee has been established under the chairpersonship of the Deputy President to coordinate government's contribution to the National Dialogue.

We will be establishing a Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of various sectors of society, to set strategic priorities and coordinate implementation of the National Dialogue process.

The Secretariat, which is responsible for day-to-day management of National Dialogue activities, will be housed at NEDLAC, the National Economic Development and Labour Council.

As a nation, we are embarking on a new path of partnership and united action.

We are drawing on our traditions of dialogue and debate. We are determined to define a shared vision of a nation which belongs to all South Africans united in their diversity.

I thank you.