

# Presidential Employment Stimulus programmes to reach 1m beneficiaries

The first two phases of the Presidential Employment Stimulus programmes supported over 850,000 work opportunities, President Cyril Ramaphosa revealed in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Thursday.



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Reflecting on the programmes' success at the Cape Town City Hall, the President revealed that more than 80% of participants were young people, with over 60% of them women.

The programmes, he said, would soon reach over one million South African direct beneficiaries.

“This includes over half a million young people appointed as education assistants, making it the largest youth employment programme ever undertaken in our history,” he said, as he delivered the State of the Nation Address.

The employment stimulus would also enable the Department of Home Affairs to recruit 10,000 unemployed young people for

the digitisation of paper records, enhancing their skills and contributing to the modernisation of citizen services.

“The Social Employment Fund will create a further 50,000 work opportunities using the capability of organisations beyond government, in areas such as urban agriculture, early childhood development, public art and tackling gender-based violence,” he said.

In addition to expanding public employment, government will be providing support to young people to prepare them for work and link them to opportunities.

“To encourage hiring by smaller businesses, we will be increasing the value and expanding the criteria for participation in the Employment Tax Incentive.

“For several years, this has been an effective way to encourage companies to hire new work seekers. The changes to the incentive will make it easier for small businesses in particular to hire young people,” he said.

He added that Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana would announce the details of these changes in the Budget Speech on 23 February.

He called on companies to support this effort, take up the incentive and “give young people a place in the world of work”.

Honing in on youth unemployment initiatives, he cited the SAYouth.mobi platform. The platform assists young work seekers to access opportunities.

Support in the programme, he said, now had more than 2.3m young South Africans registered.

Of these, over 600,000 people have been placed into employment opportunities.

## **National Youth Service**

He said that a revitalised National Youth Service would recruit its first cohort of 50,000 young people.

During the next year, the service was expected to contribute to creating opportunities for young people to contribute to their communities, develop their skills and grow their employability.

Still in the stimulus, it was expected that the Department of Higher Education and Training would place 10,000 unemployed Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates in workplaces from April 2022.

“We are calling on the private sector to support these measures – and, wherever possible, to drop experience as a hiring requirement – to give as many young people as possible their first job.”

## **Scheme to support farmers**

He added: “As we work to grow the economy and create jobs, we will expand support to poor families to ensure that no person in this country has to endure the pain and indignity of hunger.”

Through the Presidential Employment Stimulus and the Solidarity Fund, President Ramaphosa said over 100,000 farmers had already received input vouchers to expand their production.

This scheme has proven to be effective and impactful, he said.

“The agriculture sector has also recognised the importance of supporting small-scale farmers and integrating them into value chains.

“Through the Sugar Master Plan, the industry has provided R225m to over 12,000 small-scale sugar cane growers as part of a R1bn commitment to support black farmers.

We will be expanding the provision of input vouchers and calling on other sectors to join this effort, so that we can collectively reach up to 250,000 small-scale farmers this year,” he said.

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