



MINISTRY OF FINANCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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SPEECH BY MINISTER OF FINANCE

OPENING ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, MR ENOCH GODONGWANA, AT THE PRE-WEF BREAKFAST BRIEFING SESSION

16 January 2025

1. Introduction

Good morning, distinguished guests, colleagues in Cabinet, and partners in business.

It is a privilege to welcome you to the Pre-WEF Breakfast Briefing Session. This gathering underscores the importance of collaboration between business and government as we prepare to present South Africa's story on the global stage.

The WEF Annual Meeting brings together a wide array of key global stakeholders. These audiences are keen to understand the opportunities and challenges facing South Africa. It is essential that we align our key messages to showcase our country's strengths, address misconceptions, and advance our collective priorities. By presenting a unified message, we can enhance South Africa's standing and influence in the global community.

2. WEF Theme

This year's WEF theme, *Collaboration in the Intelligent Age*, speaks directly to the era we are entering, one defined by transformative technologies and interconnected challenges. For South Africa, this theme resonates deeply. Collaboration is the foundation upon which we can harness innovation to address our economic and social challenges, while ensuring that technological advancements are inclusive and equitable. Minister Malatsi will delve further into this theme, exploring its implications for our nation and how we can leverage it to drive growth and prosperity.



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3. G20 Presidency

This year's WEF is particularly significant for South Africa. For the first time in many years, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, will lead the South African delegation. This presents a golden opportunity to not only strengthen South Africa's visibility on the world stage, but to also profile our G20 Presidency.

Under the theme of *Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability*, our G20 Presidency reflects the essence of South Africa's vision for global leadership.

- **Solidarity** emphasises the power of unity and mutual support, recognising that our interconnected world requires cooperative solutions to shared challenges.
- **Equality** focuses on creating fair opportunities for all and addressing systemic disparities, ensuring that no one is left behind in our pursuit of global development.
- **Sustainability** reminds us of the need to balance economic growth with social inclusion and environmental stewardship, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come.

4. Domestic Economy

Turning to the state of the South African economy, we acknowledge the challenges we face. The third quarter contraction, combined with the slight downward revision of the second quarter GDP, resulted in modest growth of 0.4% over the first three quarters of 2024. This was below the projections included in the 2024 MTBPS macroeconomic forecast.

However, we remain cautiously optimistic. There are significant upside risks to growth in the final quarter, including faster-than-anticipated easing of inflationary pressures, improved electricity reliability, and the stimulus effect of the withdrawals of the two-pot retirement system. While the road ahead is challenging, these positive indicators provide a foundation for stronger growth in 2025 and beyond.



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5. Government of National Unity

In the political arena, South Africa's Government of National Unity (GNU) has demonstrated its potential to unite the nation and foster progress. This era of governance has allowed for meaningful discussions on accelerating structural reforms. The positive reception from both the markets and the public has created a conducive environment for the GNU to deliver on its commitments and build an investment friendly environment.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, as we prepare to represent South Africa in Davos, let us remember the strength that lies in collaboration. Together, government and business can drive the messages that matter most, which are those of resilience, opportunity, and shared prosperity.

Thank you for your commitment to this mission. I look forward to our productive discussions today and to working with all of you to ensure South Africa's success on the global stage.

Thank you.