

Motlanthe Speech Fails To Find Much Favour

Written by Rudi Prinsloo

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President Kgalema Motlanthe's likely one and only state of the nation address did not find much favour with some opposition parties on Friday.

"I am disappointed that President Kgalema Motlanthe used his State of the Nation address today to deliver an ANC election speech," Democratic Alliance leader Helen Zille said.

"A State of the Nation address should look forward to the future. It should reassure the nation that the government has a comprehensive and carefully-considered programme of action to meet the challenges which face us," she said.

Motlanthe's speech, by contrast, spent too much time looking back to the past.

He had delivered a selective and partisan history lesson when, instead, he should have focused more on how his government planned to grow the economy, crack down on crime and corruption, and address the crises in public education and healthcare.

However, Zille relented slightly, adding that Motlanthe deserved credit for acknowledging the global economic meltdown posed serious dangers for the economy.

"This is the first time that he has pronounced on the matter," she said.

United Democratic Movement leader Bantu Holomisa said Motlanthe's speech was not surprising.

"The UDM notes that many of the promises and commitments he has made are not new.

"While the President's effort to inspire hope is commendable, he has failed to indicate how the policy goals he talked about will be achieved now, if the ANC government has consistently failed to do so in the past.

"For instance, how will his often-stated commitment to fighting corruption and crime be implemented when leaders of his party are dodging their day in court?" Holomisa asked.

Independent Democrats leader Patricia de Lille, on the other hand, welcomed Motlanthe's "honesty on the challenges we are facing as a nation".

"As usual, however, the question is whether we have the skills and the will within government and the public service to implement these plans.

"The President also said his government has made the fight against corruption 'one of the core areas of focus', but we in the Independent Democrats disagree with this.

"All of our people will know that the ANC as a party and as a government has covered up and

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very often rewarded those accused and found guilty of corruption," she said.

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