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Media Release:

COPE'S Response to the 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA)

For Immediate release

"A Bold and People-Centered Alternative for South Africa"

The Congress of the People (COPE) acknowledges the 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA) for its attempts to address some of South Africa's pressing issues.

However, the address falls short of providing urgent, decisive action needed to lift our country from its economic stagnation, high unemployment, municipal collapse and worsening cost-of-living crisis.

Much like previous SONAs, this address failed to inspire hope or rally confidence among ordinary people and businesses. Instead, it was full of rhetoric and unworkable proposals that promise little in terms of real change.

While the Government of National Unity (GNU) offers an opportunity for cooperative governance, COPE is deeply concerned that it continues to be dominated by the ANC.

This framework protects vested interests and fails to hold those in power accountable. Instead of addressing the nation's real issues, the same failing policies are being repackaged. It's time for a new approach to governance.

COPE is offering a bold alternative policy agenda that prioritises:

- Decisive economic growth and job creation
- Immediate cost-of-living relief for struggling South Africans
- A smaller, more accountable government
- Reform of municipal service delivery
- Strong crime prevention and a zero-tolerance approach to corruption

A Bold Economic Vision

The 2025 SONA promises a modest 3% economic growth but fails to provide a clear strategy to overcome South Africa's economic stagnation. This target is far too low to reverse the country's unemployment and poverty crisis. COPE proposes a bold 5% growth target, which is achievable with the right strategies in place.

We propose a comprehensive, pro-growth economic recovery plan, driven by all social partners and led by a restructured NEDLAC.

Key Actions for Economic Recovery:

- **Cut Red Tape and Tax Burdens on Businesses:**
 - Reform the tax regime for SMEs to encourage investment and growth.
 - Establish a Small Business Growth Fund to provide zero-interest loans to SMEs.

- **Restructure State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and End Bailouts:**
 - Introduce strict and transparent performance contracts for SOE leadership.
 - End taxpayer-funded bailouts, hold state-owned companies financially accountable.

- **Support for Manufacturing and Local Industry Growth:**
 - Shift from importing to local production to rebuild our industrial sector. Beneficiation is key to creating jobs and wealth for South Africans.
 - Establish economic zones in townships and rural areas to expand economic opportunities and transform these living spaces.

- **Energy Security and Affordable Power for All:**
 - Encourage local investment in renewable energy and nuclear power for long-term stability.
 - Abolish VAT on electricity for households and small businesses.

COPE is committed to building a South Africa that is:

- Economically strong and job-creating
- Affordable for ordinary citizens
- Safe and free from crime
- Governed by accountable and ethical leaders

The 2025 SONA does not go far enough in addressing the deep suffering of ordinary South Africans. COPE is committed to bold, decisive action to fix our economy, restore service delivery and eliminate corruption.

South Africa needs a government that works for the people, not for politicians. Unfortunately, the ANC-led GNU represents more of the same failed policies. This is why COPE's alternative policies, designed to put the needs of the people first, are essential for the future of our nation.

South Africa deserves better. Let's Build Prosperity For All.

Issued By: COPE (Congress Of The People)

For More Information: COPE Media Officer
Aubrey Molobi/ 061 994 7572

25 Medgate Centre. 05 Kingfisher Street, Helderkruijn, Roodeport, 1724
Johannesburg 2092 Tel: 061 994 7572 media@copesa.org.za www.copesa.org.za