

New programmes to reduce cost of living in South Africa-

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President Cyril Ramaphosa says government has embarked on programmes to address inequality and improve the quality of the lives of previously disadvantaged South Africans.

The President said this when he returned to the National Assembly to field oral questions on Thursday.

“As I have said in this house before, nation-building really requires that we take measures to advance those South Africans who have been severely disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.

“That is why we have directed public resources towards the poor; why we have implemented employment equity and broad-based black economic empowerment policies and why we have massively expanded access to education.

“This is the focus of this government to make sure that we redress the imbalances of the past and that we position those who were previously disadvantaged in a way they can advance and have a better life in our beautiful South Africa,” he said.

The ANC’s Priscilla Mantashe had asked the President to unpack the plans that government had in place to reduce inequality and in the process, create a fairer and more just society.

The President said while economic growth is absolutely necessary for job creation, government has embarked on specific measures to direct young, unemployed people into employment and other economic activities.

He said the programme aims to ensure that every young person in South Africa has a place to go, is given a chance – whether in further education and training, skills development, employment, work experience, entrepreneurship and youth service.

“We are opening up all those channels to give young people an opportunity to get job opportunities and get good training to be ready for the world of work.

“We are currently working with our social partners in implementing the creation of jobs in line with what we decided on in the job summit, focusing on challenges and opportunities in specific industries.

“As you once heard, the Deputy President, the Ministers and myself meet our social partners every first Monday of the month to look at precisely the constraints

that we can remove to ensure that we implement the job summit agreements. We are making progress.”

He said government’s economic programmes are fundamentally directed towards the reduction of poverty.

“This more than anything else will help to remove ruminants of social and economic advancement.”

Programmes to reduce the cost of living

The President said, meanwhile, that government was working on programmes aimed at reducing the cost of living.

“We are working on programmes to reduce the cost of living and I have often said that the cost of living in our country is rather too high and one is not only focusing on data prices, transport prices.

“It is a whole variety of areas where the cost of living is excessively high and has an over-bearing effect, particularly on poor people.”

With Stats SA recently releasing data that shows that commuters who live far from their places of work spend a notable chunk of their income on transport, he said that government was focusing on improving public transport and expanding the asset base of the poor through accelerated land reform and the provision of well-located housing.

“We are working to improve the quality and accessibility of health care for the poor and through the introduction of the National Health Insurance (NHI) to remove the massive inequality between the public and private health sector.

“The National Minimum Wage, which came into effect in January this year, aims to raise the income of the lowest paid workers and reduce income inequality.

“Ultimately, the most effective measure to reduce inequality is education and the development of skills. Since the advent of democracy, we have made great strides in making education accessible.”