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REVITALISATION

Ramaphosa targets construction mafias as he launches R1 trillion infrastructure initiative

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PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa has given the construction industry the green light to initiate mega infrastructure projects to turbocharge the country's economy through infrastructure development.

Ramaphosa said his administration has placed the infrastructure development programme at the centre of the country's economic growth.

Ramaphosa, who is preparing to welcome international leaders to the G20 Summit next week, addressed the 2025 National Construction Summit held at the Birchwood Hotel in Ekurhuleni yesterday.

He stated that the R1 trillion medium-term budget allocation by Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana is central in his administration's bold plans for the country, with all the involved ministers also committed to seeing the country being turned into a big construction site.

On Wednesday, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana announced that the government will allocate over R1 trillion to public infrastructure projects over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

The construction industry's recent job growth, as highlighted by the labour force survey, and the favourable budget allocation have bolstered President Ramaphosa's confidence.

He urged international visitors to observe the ongoing projects nationwide, believing this visibility will stimulate investment in the country's infrastructure development programme, which is crucial for the struggling economy.

"The construction industry is a crucial driver for the growth we envision for our country. This industry has contributed 130 000 jobs in the third quarter of this year, and these new jobs reflect an upswing in the industry."

"These jobs are transforming communities, contributing to a more inclusive South Africa, and that is why we are committed to R1 trillion spending over the medium term. This is the first time since the dawn of democracy that such large sums have been committed to infrastructure," he said.

The summit, organised by the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), has brought together government leaders, industry professionals, and innovators in a bid to confront delivery challenges, accelerate performance, and lay the foundation for a more capable, inclusive, and future-ready construction sector.

In his keynote address at the event, Ramaphosa delivered a firm rebuke to construction mafias and other disruptive elements.

These groups, he stressed, pose a threat to the delivery of essential infrastructure services within communities.

"Visitors must see we are a country at work. We will not negotiate with construction mafias, and we will certainly not yield to cable thieves. In fact, we should say we have declared war on construction mafias and they will not stop us."

"I am pleased by the progress we are making and our law enforcement agencies are making in dealing with those who want to hold us back," he said.

Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, said the department is winning the war against construction mafias after having strengthened collaborative efforts between the department and law enforcement agencies.

He said since the last summit, there have been fewer construction site stoppages, with an increase in the number of arrests made against disruptive forces.

"Following our last summit in Durban last year, we committed to restoring law and order at our construction sites, which have been riddled with the reign of terror."

"We need to restore public confidence in the construction sector if we are to turn South Africa into a construction site. Since our last summit, we have made major progress against so-called construction mafias, strengthened partnerships across government and business," he said.