



Monday, 07 June 2021

Dear Fellow South African,

Later this week, I will be travelling to the United Kingdom to attend the G7 Leaders' Summit. We have been invited as a guest country together with South Korea, Australia and India.

The summit will discuss how to promote future prosperity through free and fair trade, championing shared values and tackling climate change, but the global recovery from COVID-19 is likely to dominate the agenda.

In extending the invitation, the G7 group of countries acknowledge South Africa's role in driving the continental response to COVID during our AU chair-hip, and the contribution it can make to global progress.

Much as we are a developing economy and despite facing considerable challenges given rise to by the pandemic on our society, we have done and will continue to do our best.

South Africa can hold its head high among the community of nations because we remain a country that is free and united and determined to succeed.

Gatherings such as the G7 are important opportunities for South Africa to promote its view of a fairer and more peaceful world. They are also an opportunity to promote our country as a destination in which to invest and do business, as a partner for development, and as an ally in resolving the most

pressing social and political issues facing humankind. These gatherings also give us an opportunity to promote our continent as a destination for investment.

Our delegation to the G7 Summit will be able to talk about the progress we are making in overcoming the pandemic and the measures we have taken towards our national recovery that are slowly but steadily yielding results.

We will be able to talk about the green shoots of economic progress I spoke of in the Presidency Budget vote in Parliament last week. Among them are the tangible results of commitments made by this administration to resolve challenges that have long hindered our economic growth.

I will be presenting the clear signals that our country is emerging from the devastation wrought by the pandemic. These signals include a strengthening currency, a record trade surplus, and growth in mining, financial services and manufacturing. We can also talk about the life changing opportunities being provided to our people through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, which has directly benefited nearly 700,000 people since it was launched eight months ago. We can reflect that there is progress towards greater policy and regulatory certainty in important economic sectors such as energy and telecommunications.

The G7 Leaders' Summit is an opportunity to seek broader support for the struggle we are waging alongside India and more than 100 other countries to achieve a temporary waiver of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property agreement at the WTO to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. This will enable countries to manufacture their own vaccines and pave the way for the development of a local pharmaceutical manufacturing industry in our own country and on the continent.

The message I will be taking to the G7 Summit will be one of hope about the prospects for our country's recovery, and indeed the global recovery.

But not everyone in this country is ready for that message. When times are tough, it is easy to be pessimistic.

It is understandable that citizens may be frustrated by the slow pace of change, and feel that our problems appear to be intractable. Our high rate of unemployment, for example, has not improved since the global financial crisis more than a decade ago and was made much worse by the pandemic.

But sometimes we are so absorbed by our shortcomings that we often fail to acknowledge what we are doing right and where things are improving.

We are making progress in resolving many of our challenges, from corruption to energy shortages to the obstacles that discourage investment. The pace of reform is picking up.

We do not take the patience and resilience of the South African people for granted. We acknowledge our shortcomings as a government and are working to remedy them.

Optimism is the foundation of progress and hope is the companion of development.

Cynical though some among us may be, let the progress we are making in overcoming the immediate crisis, motivate us to do even better.

Our democracy was founded in hope where there seemingly was none. We emerged from a desperate situation that threatened to engulf us and built a new nation. Over the last year and a half, we rallied together to fight the pandemic, united in the belief that better days would come.

Throughout the course of our history we have had setbacks and false starts. But our resilient nature allowed us to weather many storms. It is this drive and determination that must continue to propel us forward as our country recovers socially, politically and economically.

Let us look ahead and move forward. Let us nurture the green shoots of progress. Let us not only hope for better days, but let us work even harder to achieve them.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cyril Ramaphosa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.