

Citrus Growers Association calls for urgent port and rail reforms to support export growth

The Citrus Growers Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has urged the government to expedite reforms in ports and rail infrastructure, aligning with commitments made by President Cyril Ramaphosa during his recent State of the Nation Address (Sona). The CGA anticipates that the parliamentary debate on Sona will instill urgency in logistics reforms, as Ramaphosa emphasized the need for restructuring entities like Transnet to enhance infrastructure and foster operational competition.

Dr. Boitshoko Ntshabele, the newly appointed CEO of the CGA, stated, "2025 must be a year of action on the logistics front. There seems to be a general assumption that the logistics crisis is over, but we are not out of the woods yet." The CGA aims to collaborate with the government to drive economic growth through efficient logistics.

The formation of a State-Owned Enterprises Reform Unit was also underscored by Ramaphosa. The CGA, representing an industry employing 140,000 people at the farm level, expressed hope that these reforms will bring about substantial change. The CGA stressed the necessity for improved efficiency at container terminals, achievable through public-private partnerships.

The CGA highlighted the potential for increasing citrus exports from 165 million to 260 million cartons over the next seven years, potentially creating 100,000 new jobs and enhancing foreign exchange revenue. Despite progress at ports, container terminal efficiency remains a concern, especially with anticipated increases in citrus production.

Ntshabele noted the significance of the new Transnet Network Statement, which allows private rail operators access to the freight rail system. "This has the potential to be a moment of historic importance," he said. Ramaphosa also emphasized expanding agricultural exports to new markets in Asia and the United States, benefiting both the local economy and international consumers.

Source: IOL (<https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/economy/citrus-growers-call-for-urgency-on-ports-and-rail-reforms-to-boost-south-africas-exports-e472db5f-9c2c-471f-8bcc-440e71b2c1b9>)

Publication date: Wed 12 Feb 2025

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