

## Media Releases 2011

### President Zuma praises SARS for its role in building democracy at the SARS Amakhwezi Annual Awards 2011

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**President Jacob Zuma** has praised the South African Revenue Service (SARS) for its revenue collection efforts over the past decade which has seen a staggering R4.9 trillion being collected to fund South Africa's growth and development.

Speaking at the annual Amakhwezi awards on last Friday where SARS paid tribute to its top achievers, the President said all South Africans acknowledge and appreciate the contribution that SARS is making towards building and strengthening our democracy.

Mr Zuma commended the 15 000 women and men of SARS for being at the forefront of the country's nation-builders.

"It is no flattery or exaggeration to single out the South African Revenue Service as one of the most efficient, effective, highly regarded, fair and trusted institutions of state over a prolonged and sustained period," he said.

The president said that without this faith and trust in SARS, government's ability to finance its programme of action to meet the needs of our people would be seriously undermined.



"It is imperative for SARS to maintain its independence, its values, its moral authority and its objectivity. You must continue to act without fear or favour in ensuring the full compliance with the law by each and every South African – irrespective of who they are or what office they may hold.

"We cannot and will not tolerate anyone – from within government or outside of government, from within SARS or outside of SARS – to denigrate the hard-won reputation you have built as a credible, objective, apolitical and non-partisan institution of state."

Referring to developments in the rest of the world, the president added that countries that cannot fund themselves or repay their debts were at the mercy of donors, creditors and international organisations with their own often narrow agendas and self interest.

"Indeed, one of the features that differentiate South Africa from many countries, on the continent and elsewhere, is our ability to fund our own destiny," the president said.

Mr Zuma told the audience that SARS and other organs of state also have a key role to play in creating an environment conducive to job creation. This includes facilitating entrepreneurship and easing the entry into the formal economy by small business.

In addition, as a key role-player in securing South Africa's borders, the Customs division at SARS has a vital part to play in simultaneously facilitating legitimate trade and in keeping out unwanted goods which pose a threat to our local businesses and our people.

But he added that there was a further important role for SARS to play. SARS plays an important role in the fight against fraud and corruption, through working with enforcement agencies in rooting out non-compliance.



"We cannot allow this scourge to divert our limited resources away from the people who need them the most. Neither can we allow corruption to undermine the faith of our people that their hard-earned tax money is being spent efficiently, effectively and with integrity.

At the heart of tax compliance is a social compact between taxpayers and the state. Corruption is one of the greatest threats to this social compact.

Our role as government is to live up to the faith which our people have placed on us to spend this money wisely in providing for the needs of all our country's people," he said