



ECONOMIC COMMENTARY

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YOUR MONTHLY
ECONOMIC UPDATE
7 May 2026

*For every one to attain
financial well-being*

ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY IN SA: HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

South Africans have become very good at adjusting. When interest rates rise, we adjust. When food and fuel prices increase, we adjust. When the rand weakens, we adjust. When growth disappoints, unemployment remains high, and politics becomes noisy, we adjust again. But there is a danger in becoming too good at adjusting. At some point, households stop planning and start surviving. They delay decisions, reduce savings, cancel insurance, take on expensive debt, or leave their financial future to chance, relying on whatever is left at the end of the month. That is not financial planning. That is financial drift.

South Africa's (SA's) economy is not without hope, but it is also not strong enough to carry households that are financially unprepared. Recent growth has been modest, inflation has been relatively contained but vulnerable to fuel and global price shocks, and unemployment remains one of our country's deepest structural wounds. In other words, the macro picture is not collapsing, but it is also not giving ordinary families enough margin for error. That is why the real financial question is changing. It is no longer only about which investment will give the best return. The question is now: "Is my financial life strong enough to withstand uncertainty and still move forward?"

This is where financial well-being becomes more than just a slogan. It is a framework for building resilience in a country where uncertainty is part of the operating environment. Financial well-being for every one means helping individuals and households build a life that is better planned, better protected, and better positioned for long-term growth.

The first layer is **financial foundations**. Before a household can build wealth, it must build control. That means understanding cash flow, reducing destructive debt, creating an emergency buffer, maintaining accurate financial records, reviewing beneficiaries, and ensuring that monthly decisions align with long-term priorities. In a weak economy, the households that suffer most are often not only those with too little income, but also those with too little structure around the income that they do have.

The second layer is **income protection**. For most people, their greatest asset is not their retirement fund, their home, or their investment portfolio. It is their ability to earn an income over the next 10, 20, or 30 years. Yet, many people protect their phones, cars, and appliances more carefully than they protect the income that pays for everything. Disability cover, severe illness cover, life cover, skills development, and career resilience are not side issues. They are central to financial survival.

The third layer is **wealth creation**. Uncertainty often pushes people into emotional decisions. Some become too cautious and sit permanently in cash. Others become desperate and chase quick returns. Neither approach builds sustainable wealth. Long-term investing still matters. Diversification still matters. Retirement planning still matters. Tax efficiency still matters. The point is not to ignore uncertainty, but to invest through it with discipline.

The fourth layer is **wealth protection**. This includes short-term insurance, estate planning, wills, liquidity planning, ownership structures, and making sure that your family is not left unprepared when something goes wrong. Wealth is not truly created if it can disappear through one uninsured event, one legal gap, or one badly-planned estate.

Economic uncertainty is real. South Africans cannot control global oil prices, the rand, interest rates, political decisions, or economic growth. But we can control the quality of our financial planning. The households that will cope best with uncertainty are not necessarily the wealthiest. They are the ones with the strongest foundations, the best-protected income, the most disciplined wealth-creation strategy, and the clearest plan to protect what they have built. In SA, financial well-being is not a luxury. It is how we turn uncertainty from a permanent threat into something we are prepared to face.

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