

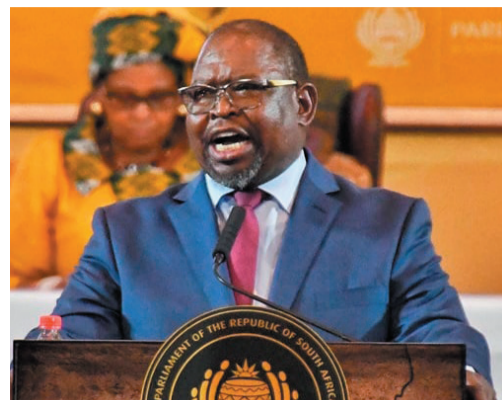
# Cabinet Statement

Statement on the Cabinet Meeting  
of Wednesday, 28 February 2024



## ISSUES FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

### ECONOMY



#### National Budget Speech

- Cabinet welcomed the 2024 National Budget, which demonstrated the resolute commitment by government to consistently manage the country's economy and take tough decisions necessary to balance the deficit while promoting economic growth.

**The National Budget continues to drive critical priorities and support for the most vulnerable of our nation. It provides social assistance to improve the living conditions of poor, vulnerable and underprivileged South Africans. These include unemployed South Africans, and orphaned and vulnerable children living in child-headed households.**

- The consolidation and tabling of the 2024 National Budget is an important part of South Africa's open and accountable system of democracy.

- Cabinet is confident that the National Budget allocations will translate into economic gains that rebuild our economic standing.

#### Public-Private Partnership

- Cabinet welcomed the first-of-its-kind public-private partnership agreement between Sasol and Transnet Freight Rail to improve the reliability of rail transport.
- Under a five-year agreement, Transnet Freight Rail will use its fleet of 128 ammonia tankers to deliver ammonia from Sasol facilities to customers and in return, Sasol will fund the maintenance and repair programme of the fleet.
- The partnership advances work on the country's Freight Logistics Roadmap to turn around the sector. This partnership demonstrates how working together we can overcome our pressing challenges.

#### Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS)

- Statistics South Africa's recent QLFS that showed a slight rise in the country's unemployment rate in the fourth quarter of 2023 to 32.1% from 31.9% in the third quarter, motivates us as government to redouble our efforts to draw more people into work opportunities.

**While our economy continues to create jobs, it is not at the level that government aims to achieve in order to address the challenge of unemployment. The QLFS showed that the informal sector employment increased by 124 000, finance by 128 000 jobs, transport by 57 000, mining by 37 000 jobs and private households by 18 000 jobs.**

- Cabinet called on all sectors to support the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, which is helping to provide work and livelihood opportunities to millions of South Africans.

#### 20th Anniversary of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

- The year 2024 marks 20 years of the existence of the EPWP, which represents one of South Africa's success stories of mass public employment programmes and is by far one of the largest poverty alleviation initiatives.
- Cabinet received a briefing on the implementation and achievements of the EPWP, a flagship government programme that has provided millions of work opportunities to unemployed South Africans since its inception.

**The EPWP has over the past 20 years created over 14 million work opportunities, making it the largest continuous public employment programme in the world. This milestone was achieved through continuous partnerships with the private sector and civil society. These work opportunities have contributed to skills development for the participants as they were created under a range of EPWP projects in the tourism, agriculture, infrastructure, social projects and projects led by women.**

- Cabinet was informed that 4 609 000 work opportunities were created during Phase 4 medium term of the EPWP, which covers the period 2019/2020 – 2022/23. This figure represents a 92% achievement against the target set by the Sixth Administration to create five million work opportunities. Plans are in place to achieve the remaining 390 973 work opportunities by March 2024.

- Of the 4 609 000 work opportunities, the top three provinces where most work opportunities have been created are KwaZulu-Natal, which accounts for 1 064 000 opportunities (23%), followed by the Eastern Cape, with 903 789 (20%) and the Western Cape at 508 954 (11%).
- Although most of these opportunities are short term to medium term, some have resulted in permanent employment. Figures also indicate that more than 20% of participants obtained employment outside the EPWP.
- Many past EPWP participants have successfully completed diplomas in fields such as professional cookery and some are permanently employed in the hospitality industry. In addition to work opportunities, the EPWP also contributes much more in terms of service delivery, and improvements of amenities in communities and a better quality of life.
- Over R52 billion has been transferred to the EPWP participants as wages for work done in Phase IV.
- In addition, over 600 businesses were established through the programme.



### GOVERNANCE MATTERS

#### 2024 General Elections

- Cabinet welcomed President Cyril Ramaphosa's proclamation of Wednesday, 29 May 2024 as the date for the General Elections, following his consultations with the Electoral Commission of South Africa and all nine provincial Premiers on the state of readiness for the national and provincial elections.

**Cabinet called on everyone, especially the youth, to exercise their right to vote. Years of untold sacrifice and struggle for our freedom culminated in the right to vote for the majority of South Africans in 1994. Our struggle for freedom secured the right for every South African to be active participants in our democratic system.**

- This year's elections coincide with the celebration of 30 Years of Freedom, which is a significant milestone for South Africa as it provides us with the opportunity to reflect on our successes and look for solutions to address our surmountable challenges.

#### Presidential eThekweni Working Group

- Cabinet noted President Ramaphosa's meeting on Friday, 23 February 2024 with the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry to discuss various initiatives led by national government to assist the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality to address the current water, electricity and infrastructure challenges.
- The President also established the Presidential eThekweni Working Group to accelerate the speedy resolution of issues affecting the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. The group – comprising Ministers, and eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality and business officials – will regularly present progress reports to the President.

#### 14th Policy Dialogue Forum (PDF) of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education

- Cabinet noted the country's successful hosting of the 14th PDF of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education in Sandton, Johannesburg on Monday, 26 February 2024. It brought together education stakeholders from across the globe to foster advocacy, knowledge exchange

and the monitoring of progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education.

- The PDF released a High-Level Panel Report on the Teaching Profession and also launched the Global Report on teacher shortages.

#### Crime combating

- Cabinet commends the South African Police Service for their tireless work, which has led to the arrest of seven persons in connection with the murder of Kiernan 'AKA' Forbes and his friend 'Tibbo' Tibz' Motsokane. Two of the suspects were arrested in Eswatini and are still to be extradited to the country.
- The arrests are because of months of painstaking police work. The suspects arrested included a coordinator, shooters, spotter, and person who hired the vehicle and firearms.

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 37th African Union (AU) Summit

- Cabinet appreciated the progress made at the 37th AU Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 17 and 18 February

2024, which outlined Africa's priorities for 2024 and beyond. President Ramaphosa joined other African leaders in discussing key continental priorities including peace and security, climate change, economic development and Africa's role in the wider global multilateral context.

- The summit adopted the Second 10-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, which will see the acceleration of flagship projects such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, in which South Africa is playing a leading role.
- President Ramaphosa also presented a report on the continent's response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the state of readiness against future health threats, in his capacity as the Champion of the AU's COVID-19 response. The summit also emphasised the importance of socio-economic recovery post COVID-19, and lessons from the pandemic preparedness and response, and continental security.
- The President called on African leaders to continue improving the levels of alertness of their countries against future pandemics and urged for the adoption of a strong Common Africa Position on Pandemic Preparedness and Response.

#### South Africa's hosting of the Group of Twenty (G20) and Presidency in 2025

- Cabinet received and considered a report on the preparations for South Africa's hosting of the G20 Summit in 2025 as well as taking over the Presidency. This is a momentous event for South Africa as it will be the first country in Africa to host such a gathering; not only unique because of the anticipated numbers but also of the enduring impact it is envisaged to make.
- Cabinet is confident that South Africa will deliver a successful G20 Summit, as it has done with previous major events such as the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Summit and the African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum. The G20 Presidency presents South Africa with an opportunity to champion the aspirations of emerging markets.
- As it hosts the G20, South Africa's participation in the forum will continue to be guided by the country's commitment to advance national interests as well as those of the African continent.

## CABINET DECISIONS

#### Hosting of the Ninth annual meeting of the New Development Bank (NDB)

- Cabinet considered and approved the hosting of the annual meeting of the NDB in South Africa in June 2024.
- It has been 10 years since BRICS countries signed the Articles of Agreement of the NDB at the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil on 15 and 16 July 2014. This established the first multilateral development institution by emerging and developing countries.
- So far, South Africa has contributed

R25 billion towards the bank's paid-in Capital. South Africa is looking forward to host the meeting on NDB and commits to working hand in hand with the bank and its member countries to achieve sustainable development and create a better African continent.

#### Strategy for the Employment of Social Service Professionals (SSPs)

- Cabinet approved the Strategy for the Employment of SSPs as part of

increasing the human resource capacity of government, non-governmental organisations and the private sector to proactively respond to social ills that are facing the country.

- The strategy is a collective commitment to building a social service sector that is responsive to the needs of our communities and overcome social ills such as crime, gender-based violence and femicide, teenage pregnancies, bullying, child-headed households, mental health and substance abuse.
- The strategy is also aimed at laying the

foundation for a socially inclusive and resilient future and a caring society.

#### Green Paper on Comprehensive Social Security

- Cabinet considered and approved the publication and call for public comments on the revised *Green Paper on Comprehensive Social Security* for the country.
- The paper aims to introduce a mandatory social security pension system that provides retirement, disability and death benefits to all workers. Low-income earners would have their contribu-

tions subsidised in line with existing provisions. The paper further proposes the harmonisation of the tax treatment of older persons in the tax and social grant system to address the unequal treatment of older persons in the two regimes.

- In addition, the paper also seeks to propose institutional reforms to promote coherence in social security policymaking for administrative efficiency, improved service delivery and ensure effective regulation, governance and oversight across all social security arrangements.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Human Rights Month

- This year's commemoration of Human Rights Month and Human Rights Day on 21 March takes place on the eve of the nation's celebration of 30 Years of Freedom in April.
- Under the theme: "Three Decades of Respect for and Promotion of Human Rights", Cabinet calls on everyone to play their part towards strengthening our human rights, and to cherish our freedom and democracy, which was attained at great cost.

#### District Development Model (DDM) Presidential Imbizo

- The President will host the 12th DDM Presidential Imbizo on Thursday, 7 March 2024 at the Nkangala District Municipality in Mpumalanga.
- The Imbizo brings together leaders from all three spheres of government to interact with residents on service-delivery challenges and sets out plans for service-delivery improvements and community development in the area.

- The DDM Presidential Imbizo and oversight visits have occurred in all nine provinces as part of efforts to reinforce ongoing work of improving the lives of citizens.
- Cabinet calls on residents of the Nkangala District Municipality and surrounding areas to attend the Imbizo and engage their public representatives on issues affecting them.

#### Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium South Africa (SIDSSA) 2024

- It is all systems go for the SIDSSA 2024, which will take place in Cape Town from 17 to 19 March 2024. The SIDSSA brings together critical role-players in the infrastructure sector who are key to accelerating the pace of infrastructure investments in the country.
- Infrastructure development has been the key priority of government and the Sixth Administration, as it contributes to economic growth and job creation. The SIDSSA will showcase some of the

progress in the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment Plan that was approved by Cabinet in May 2020.

#### Second Black Industrialists and Exporters Conference

- The second Black Industrialists and Exporters Conference will be convened at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg on Wednesday, 20 March 2024.
- The conference will recognise business excellence and honour enterprises that embody the spirit of success and innovation, and demonstrate job creation, good business ethics and quality.
- More than 600 black industrial firms supported by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition showed a turnover of about R80 billion during the 2023/24 financial year, illustrating the tangible results in drawing more black entrepreneurs into the industrial economy.

## MESSAGES

#### Congratulations

Cabinet extended its congratulations and well-wishes to:

- Ms Michelle Phillips** on her appointment as the Group CEO of Transnet and **Ms Nosipho Maphumulo** as Group Chief Financial Officer of Transnet. These appointments are critical to the ongoing work to rebuild the capacity within Transnet as part of the work to restore the country's freight, rail and logistics capacity.
- Mr Wamkele Mene**, for his re-election as the Secretary General of the African Continental Free Trade Area.
- Mr Sibusiso Ngalwa**, who is the current Chairperson of the South African National Editors' Forum, on his appointment to the Executive Committee of the African Editors' Forum.
- Banyana Banyana**, the national women's soccer team, for its victory in the second leg of the CAF Women's Olympic Qualifiers. The team won the two-legged outing on a 4-0 on aggregate, and they will face Nigeria in the final round in April 2024.

#### Condolences

Cabinet expressed condolences to the family and friends of:

- Captain Simon Mkhulu Bobe** and **Lance Corporal Irven Thabang Semono** of the South African National Defence Force, who were killed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on 14 February 2024. They were part of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the DRC, commonly known as SAMIDRC, deployed to restore security, peace and stability in line with the AU Agenda of "Silencing the Guns by 2030". Cabinet also wished the three other soldiers injured in the attack a speedy recovery.
- The **nine people from Mpumalanga** who lost their lives in a tragic bus accident in Paulpietersburg, KwaZulu-Natal while returning from the African National Congress rally in eThekweni.