

# Cabinet Statement

Statement on the Cabinet Meeting of Wednesday, 26 February 2025



**G20** SOUTH AFRICA 2025

Solidarity

Equality

Sustainability

**30** YEARS OF FREEDOM

## ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- South Africa's Presidency of the Group of Twenty (G20)
- South Africa's Presidency of the G20 under the theme: "Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability", has commenced in earnest with the successful conclusion of the First G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Johannesburg from 20 to 21 February 2025, and the First G20 Finance Ministers and Central Banks Governors meeting currently underway in Cape Town from 26 to 27 February.

**The First G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting was an opportunity for the G20 Foreign Ministers to reflect on the global geopolitical challenges and discuss ways in which the G20 could contribute to finding solutions to these. The meeting supported South Africa's approach of managing geopolitical issues, its G20 Presidency priorities and high-level deliverables, and reaffirmed the role of the G20 as the premier forum for international economic cooperation.**

- In addition, South Africa successfully hosted the following Working Groups' meetings:
  - First Education Working (12-13 February 2025, virtually). The purpose of the meeting was to share and seek consensus in the three priorities of the Working Group, namely: (a) Priority 1: Quality Foundational Learning; the role of Early Childhood Care and Education to improve the quality of foundational learning; (b) Priority 2: Mutual Recognition of Qualifications in a Global Context; and Priority 3: Education Professional Development for a changing world.
  - First Women Empowerment Working Group (17-18 February 2025, virtually). The Working Group participants supported South Africa's priorities which are also aligned to their national priorities on the rights of women, and builds upon Brazil's Presidency initiatives and priorities.
  - First Digital Economy Working Group (17-19 February 2025, virtually). The meeting was a platform for South Africa to share and seek consensus on the priorities of the Working Group. The four priorities are: (a) Connectivity for inclusive digital development; (b) Digital public infrastructure and transformation; (c) Digital innovation ecosystems: unleashing the potential of micro, small and medium enterprises; and (d) Equitable, inclusive and just artificial intelligence.
  - First G20 Employment Working Group meeting (18-21 February 2025 in Gqeberha). This Working Group meeting discussed inclusive growth, youth employment, gender equality, income inequality and the impact of digitalisation on the future of work.
  - First Culture Working Group (20-21 February 2025, virtually). The priorities of the Working Group that were supported by all participants are: (a) Priority 1: Safeguarding and Resolution of Cultural Heritage to protect Human Rights; (b) Priority 2: Integrating Cultural Policies in sociology-economic strategies to ensure and inclusive Rights-based development; (c) Priority 3: Harnessing Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture and Sustainable Economies; and (d) Priority 4: The Intersection of Culture and Climate Change: Shaping Global Response.

- The following G20 Working Groups and Task Forces meetings are to be held from today until the end of March 2025:
  - First Energy Transitions Working Group Meeting: 27-28 February 2025 – virtually.
  - First Agriculture Working Group Meeting: 3-4 March 2025 – virtually.
  - First Anti-corruption Working Group Meeting: 3-5 March 2025 – Cape Town.
  - First Tourism Working Group Meeting: 5 March 2025 – virtually.
  - First Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group Meeting: 5 March 2025 – virtually.
  - First Task Force Meeting: Food Security: 5 March 2025 – virtually.
  - First Trade and Investment Working



- Group Meeting: 18-20 March 2025 – virtually.
- First Task Force Meeting: Inclusive Economic Growth, Inducement Inequality: 17 March 2025 – virtually.
- Second Health Working Group: 26-28 March 2025 – Durban.
- First Climate and Environment Sustainability Working Group Meeting: 25-28 March 2025 – virtually.
- Information on South Africa's hosting of various G20 meetings and their outcomes can be accessed on [www.g20.org](http://www.g20.org) or [www.g20.org.za](http://www.g20.org.za)

### South Africa-European Union (EU) Political Dialogue

- Cabinet welcomed the support of the EU for South Africa's positions in the global geopolitics and our G20 Presidency priorities following the successful 16th Ministerial Political Dialogue between South Africa and the EU held on 19 February 2025 in Cape Town.
- The dialogue presented an opportunity for the EU and South Africa to reiterate their common commitment to multilateralism, rules-based international order, and the centrality of the United Nations (UN) Charter. The parties further agreed on the need to reform the UN Security Council (UNSC), recognising the urgent need to make it more representative, inclusive, transparent, efficient, democratic and accountable.
- The EU and South Africa also discussed their cooperation in multilateral and regional fora, focusing, in particular, on their joint efforts to promote human rights and sustainable development, and to address climate change. They also reviewed opportunities to step up cooperation on sustainable value chains, including critical raw materials with a view to further their respective competitiveness, economic security and decarbonisation efforts.
- The meeting also served as a preparatory platform for the upcoming EU-South Africa Summit to be held on 13 March 2025 in South Africa. The summit will discuss improving economic relations, just energy transition, security and defence, sustainable value chains and multilateral cooperation. The EU is South Africa's top source of foreign direct investment and South Africa is the EU's largest trading partner in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- The meeting also underscored the importance of holding the EU-African Union (AU) Ministerial Meeting and Summit in 2025.

### AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and UNSC Resolutions on the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

- Cabinet welcomed and supports both the AU PSC and the UNSC Resolutions on the situation in the eastern DRC.
- The AU PSC endorsed the decisions of the Joint East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) meeting that demanded an immediate ceasefire, the facilitation of safe and unhindered humanitarian routes,

the withdrawal of all uninvited forces from the eastern DRC, the respect of the DRC's territorial integrity and the participation of all state and non-state actors in political dialogue under the Joint Luanda-Nairobi Process.

- The UNSC resolution urged all parties (state and non-state actors) in the eastern DRC to conclude an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, as called for by leaders of the EAC and SADC.
- The Resolution further demands that M23 rebel groups withdraw from the territories they have seized in the eastern DRC and called on the Rwanda Defence Force to stop supporting the armed group and immediately withdraw from Congolese territory "without preconditions".

**Cabinet expressed its well-wishes for a speedy recovery for all (10) returned injured soldiers who are now receiving medical treatment in South Africa, their home soil.**

### AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU-CEVAGW)

- Cabinet welcomed the AU Adoption of the AU-CEVAGW, which is a legal instrument to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls in Africa.
- The development of the AU-CEVAGW is informed by the historic decision by the AU Heads of State in February 2023 during the AU Summit.

**The convention aims to provide a comprehensive and legally binding framework for the prevention and elimination of all types of violence against women and girls throughout Africa. This will be accomplished by addressing the root causes and drivers of such violence, strengthening legal and institutional mechanisms, and promoting a culture of respect for human rights, gender equality and the dignity of women and girls.**

- It would also ensure that State Parties reinforce a common approach to eliminating violence against women and girls.

### ECONOMY

- Postponement of the tabling of the National Budget

**Cabinet wishes to reiterate that the postponement of the tabling of the National Budget from 19 February to 12 March 2025 is a result of efforts by Cabinet to collectively address our nation's funding challenges within a constrained fiscal environment.**

- Cabinet assures South Africans that deliberations within Cabinet on the 2025 National Budget are continuing to determine the best ways to fund our national priorities and ensure the budget reflects the aspirations of all South Africans.
- The postponement while it is the first in the history of South Africa, but not out of the norm in other jurisdictions, it is still

within the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999).

### Quarterly Labour Force Survey

- Cabinet welcomed the upward trajectory in employment creation following the second consecutive drop in the unemployment rate, which marks the lowest rate since the third quarter of 2023.
- The country's unemployment rate decreased to 31.9% in the fourth quarter of 2024 from 32.1% in the previous quarter. The number of employed people increased by 132 000 to 17.1 million while the number of unemployed persons decreased by 20 000 to eight (8) million during the same quarter.
- Employment over the quarter increased in four of the ten industries surveyed by Statistics South Africa, including finance (232 000), followed by manufacturing (41 000), private households (18 000) and transport (17 000).

**Cabinet affirmed government's commitment to create jobs with a special focus on youth employment programmes. Through the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme, almost 2.2 million work opportunities have been created for young people.**

### South Africa-China Trade and Investment

- Cabinet welcomes the successful engagement between the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) Chairman Ren Hongbin and Deputy President Paul Mashatile on fostering better trade and investment cooperation between South Africa and China.
- The visit follows the successful second State Visit to China by President Cyril Ramaphosa in September 2024. In particular, it builds on the outcomes of the President's business engagements, including the seminal South Africa-China Presidential Business Forum, the closed roundtable discussion between the President and the Leadership of 20 high-level Chinese investors, and the Presidential Business Programme in Shenzhen that focused on key investors in China's leading technology and innovation hub.
- South Africa mobilised Chinese businesses to attend the various business meetings of the G20 in the country this year while CCPIT invited South Africa to attend the 3rd China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing in July 2025.
- Relations between South Africa and China were further enhanced with the arrival of the first group of tourists from China through the country's new Trusted Tour Operator Scheme (TTOS). The TTOS allows vetted tour operators to submit group applications for tour groups from China and India through a secure digital platform and receive their outcomes digitally within a matter of hours.

### HEALTH

- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD)

- Cabinet welcomed the quick intervention by authorities following the recent outbreak of HFMD in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, which causes flu-like symptoms such as painful blisters and swollen hands. This is not the same as the animal-based foot and mouth disease and it is not fatal.
- A number of cases of the extremely contagious viral infection were detected in several primary schools and daycare centres in the two provinces.
- School principals are urged to conduct daily assessments in their schools to detect and report HFMD cases.

### Food-Borne Illnesses

- The registration deadline for all spaza shops and other food-handling outlets with their local municipality is Friday, 28 February 2025. Spaza shops that are not registered and do not meet all health standards and requirements will be closed.
- Government introduced these measures in November 2024 as part of efforts

to regulate spaza shops and prevent unnecessary deaths of children as a result of food-borne illnesses caused by contaminated food purchased from such shops. Integrated multidisciplinary inspection teams continue to conduct compliance inspections across the country to ensure that all food retailers operate legally and comply with health and safety standards.

**Cabinet calls on consumers, parents and caregivers to only buy food from places that are licensed to sell foodstuffs and observe food safety regulations. Members of the public are also encouraged to practise basic food safety measures such as washing their hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling or consuming food.**

### SOCIAL WELFARE

- South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)

- The deadline for SASSA beneficiaries to swap their SASSA Gold Card for the Postbank Black Card has been extended to 20 March 2025.
- More than 716 900 beneficiaries have transitioned to the Postbank Black Card and card distribution sites have been increased around the country to mitigate the queues so that every beneficiary receives the new card near where they live. Postbank has also increased the number of tellers in the card replacement sites from two (2) tellers to up to five (5) tellers, depending on the business of the site.
- Beneficiaries are encouraged to visit their nearest Checkers, Shoprite, Pick n Pay, Usave or Boxer store to collect their new Postbank Black Card. A valid South African identity document (ID) or temporary ID is required. Mobile offices will also be available in rural areas to assist beneficiaries. Additionally, Postbank has partnered with the Spar Group, which will designate 200 of its stores as service sites across the country.

**Cabinet reminds beneficiaries that the old SASSA Gold Card will stop working on 20 March 2025 and beneficiaries who have not exchanged their cards by then will need to visit their nearest Post Office branch to access their funds.**

### Fight Against Crime

- Cabinet welcomed the Crime Stats report which showed a decline across multiple crime categories in the country's latest crime statistics. The third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year showed a 9.8% decrease in murder, a 3.3% reduction in rape and a 3.2% drop in attempted sexual offences. There was also a notable decline in carjackings and robberies.
- While overall levels of crime continue to remain unacceptably high, the decline shows that interventions by the South African Police Service to make South Africa safer are making a difference.

**Fighting crime is a shared responsibility between the police, the community and the business sector. Cabinet calls on South Africans to play their part in the fight against crime by reporting any criminal activity to their nearest police station or calling the Crime Stop number: 08600 10111.**

### SADC Media Awards

- Cabinet calls on South African journalists to submit their entries for the 2025 SADC Media Awards. Entries for the competition close on Friday, 28 February 2025.
- Journalists who wish to enter can access more information about the competition from [www.gcis.gov.za](http://www.gcis.gov.za). The first prize winner in each category receives US\$2500 and the runner-up receives US\$1000.
- First prize winners will receive prizes and certificates on the margins of the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government that will take place in August 2025.

## UPDATE TO CABINET

### Electricity load-shedding recovery measures

- Cabinet received and welcomed an update on the recovery efforts by Eskom to stabilise the nation's power supply following a series of unforeseen incidents at multiple power stations that led to the implementation of load-shedding to protect the national grid.
- These highly unusual and unrelated incidents on 22 February 2025 resulted in a rapid depletion of reserve margins. They included an electrical fault at Majuba Power Station, the loss of cooling water pumps at Camden Power Station and unit loss at Medupi Power Station.
- Cabinet acknowledged the swift response by Eskom's technical team

to recover 4 800 megawatts (MW) with four of the five tripped units at Majuba returned and two of four tripped units returned at Camden by 8pm on 23 February 2025.

- In implementing its recovery plan, the power utility anticipates a step down in the stages of load-shedding. Efforts are focused on replenishing emergency reserves, particularly diesel stocks, to stabilise operations for the coming days.
- Despite the current setback, steady progress has been made in improving generation capacity and maintaining a reliable electricity supply. From 1 April 2024 to 20 February 2025, load-shedding was suspended

for 323 days, compared to 32 days in the same period last year. Electricity supply was available 99% of the time compared to just 9.8% last year.

**Cabinet noted that the upcoming addition of 1 600 MW with the synchronisation of Kusile Unit 6 scheduled for 9 March 2025 and Medupi Unit 4 at the end of March 2025 will further bolster our nation's energy supply.**

## CABINET DECISIONS

### Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024-2029

- Cabinet approved the MTDP for the period 2024-2029, which outlines key priorities for the Seventh Administration. The MTDP builds on the National Development Plan, the Statement of Intent of the Government of National Unity (GNU), and the consensus reached during the Cabinet Lekgotla held from 29 to 30 January 2025.
- Additionally, the MTDP incorporates the three strategic priorities outlined by President Ramaphosa in his Opening of Parliament Address on 18 July 2024. The plan guides government's initiatives to create a more inclusive country that lives up to the commitments of the GNU. It aims, among others, to ensure inclusive economic growth, reduce unemployment, poverty, and the rising cost of living as well as to ensure a capable, developmental and ethical state.

### National Communication Strategy Framework (NCSF) 2024-2029

- Cabinet approved the NCSF for implementation across all spheres of government. The NCSF forms part of the ongoing work to consolidate and enhance government-wide communication system, in support of the implementation of the MTDP 2024-2029 as envisaged

in the Government Communication Policy, approved by Cabinet in 2018, which is currently under review.

- The NCSF responds to the expectation that government communication must be coherent, improves public trust and investor confidence, foster unity and social cohesion and mobilise citizens' participation as ongoing efforts to encourage South Africans to use information to improve their lives and take advantage of socio-economic opportunities to contribute to the development of our country.

### Ratification of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade

- Cabinet approved the submission of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade to Parliament for ratification.
- The protocol aims to enhance the participation of women and youth in trade under the AfCFTA, and it outlines specific objectives such as helping women and youth traders to effectively participate in the market. It also strives to foster value addition and innovation for increased imports and exports by women and youth, as well as their inclusion in regional and continental value chains.
- The protocol also advocates for measures to elimi-

nate discrimination, promote equality and inclusivity to ensure that women and youth benefit from trade opportunities. Other significant provisions of the protocol include eliminating non-tariff barriers affecting women and youth in trade, promoting their participation in policy formulation, and improving their access to finance.

- The protocol is expected to support women and youth in trade to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA and enhance their inclusive participation in intra-Africa trade.

### Ratification of the Protocol on Competition Policy under the AfCFTA

- Cabinet approved the submission of the Protocol on Competition Policy under the AfCFTA to Parliament for ratification. The protocol is an agreement by AU Member States to ensure that competition on the continent contributes to trade, inclusive growth, industrialisation and sustainable economic development.
- The protocol focuses on preventing anti-competitive practices by providing a framework for addressing market concentration, abuse of power and other competition-related issues.
- The AU acknowledges that the absence of continen-

tal competition policies results in anti-competitive practices such as cartels and monopolies that abuse their market position.

- The protocol will apply to all economic activity within the AfCFTA market and will target anti-competitive practices including international and cross-border cartels that are not effectively regulated, as well as competitive practices initiated by larger enterprises operating outside the continent.

### Outcomes from South Africa's participation at the General Debate of the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 79)

- Cabinet considered and approved the report on the outcomes of the UNGA 79 under the theme: "Leaving no one behind: acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for present and future generations".
- South Africa's participation in the UN Summit of the future focused on the opportunity to forge global consensus and make progress on priorities such as the Sustainable Development Goals and for African countries, that the Summit must focus on global action in support of the continent's developmental agenda, Agenda 2063.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Human Rights Month

- South Africa will in March commemorate Human Rights Month under the theme: "Accelerating efforts towards social justice anchored on human rights". The history of Human Rights Month is grounded in the Sharpeville Massacre on 21 March 1960, where the apartheid police shot and killed 69 people during a peaceful protest.
- The painful legacy from apartheid's skewed policies continue to shape our present reality and has led to many people being trapped in a cycle of poverty and unemployment. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, which lays the foundation for

a free and democratic society, supports efforts to advance social justice through the redress of past injustices.

**The recently assented Expropriation Act, 2024 (Act 13 of 2024) sets forth a constitutionally mandated legal process that allows government to rectify the bitter legacy of land dispossession and poverty by helping level the playing field so that more citizens can have access to economic opportunities, basic services and land.**

- Our national Human Rights Day celebration on 21 March 2025 will take place at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, the precinct which is the seat of the Constitutional Court of South Africa.

### Africa Energy Indaba 2025

- South Africa will host the Africa Energy Indaba 2025 from 4 to 6 March 2025 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. The Indaba is a flagship event on the continent as it connects industry leaders and showcases new cutting-edge solutions for the sector.
- The conference comes at a time when South Africa's

energy sector is growing in leaps and bounds as the country works to secure its future energy supply. Last year government promulgated the Electricity Regulation Amendment Act, 2024 (Act 38 of 2024) towards creating a competitive and sustainable energy sector that can meet our nation's growing energy demands.- In securing our future energy supply, 11 gigawatts of energy projects are scheduled for construction over the next three years. In December 2024, eight preferred bidders for Bid Window 7 of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme with a combined contracted capacity of 1 760 megawatts were announced.



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## MESSAGES

### Congratulations

Cabinet extends its congratulations and well-wishes to:

- Minister Nomakhosazana Meth on her election as Chairperson of the African Regional Labour Administration Centre.
- Ms Lerato Matoboge on her historic election to the position of Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the AU.
- Ms Tyla Laura Seethal, popularly known as **Tyla**, the South African singer who is the first African solo artist whose single, *Water*, has surpassed one billion streams on Spotify.

- Mr Wouter Kellerman, South Africa's flautist along with Ms Eru Matsumoto and Ms Chandrika Tandon, the Grammy Award winners for their album, *Triveni*.

### Condolences

Cabinet expressed condolences to the friends and family of:

- Ms Suthukazi Arosi (64), the award-winning singer, composer, and actress. She was well known for being one of Africa's leading voices and an accomplished actress having performed in numerous South African productions.

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