

Cabinet Statement

Statement on the virtual Cabinet Meeting of Wednesday, 1 September 2021



ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT



■ Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) vaccine roll-out

- Cabinet was apprised by the Department of Health on the progress of the Vaccination Roll-out Programme, which included epidemiology (the branch of medicine which deals with the incidence, distribution and possible control of diseases and other factors relating to health) and surveillance. Cabinet noted the decline in new infections, as well as hospital admissions and reported death cases.
- Cabinet however noted the increase in infection reproduction rates. The Department of Health assured Cabinet that more work is being done to understand and contain the reported school cluster outbreaks, particularly in the Eastern Cape.

Meanwhile, Cabinet appeals to parents, learners and school governing bodies to ensure strict adherence to the wearing of masks, ventilation, social distancing and handwashing hygiene. Strict adherence to the non-pharmaceutical health protocols remains the most effective defence against the spread of the virus.

- By 31 August 2021, more than 12 568 525 doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered across the country. The increased number of vaccination sites, and extended vaccination days and the provision of free transport by provinces, will result in a significant increase in the number of people who will be fully vaccinated.
- Cabinet encourages unvaccinated people in our country, especially adults and those at high risk of developing severe illness, to vaccinate as quickly as possible.

Vaccines hold good benefits for our health as they prevent serious illness, hospitalisation and death. Let us fight the virus together by spreading verified information about vaccines provided by the Department of Health and World Health Organisation.

■ Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS)

- The recent QLFS results released by Statistics South Africa for the second quarter of 2021 showed that the unemployment rate increased by 1.8 percentage

points from the 32.6% recorded in the first quarter of 2021 to 34.4% in the second quarter.

- These poor results continue to bring to the fore the urgency for all sectors working with government to expedite the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) to deal with the devastating effects of COVID-19. The ERRP is at the heart of government's efforts to rebuild and transform the economy so as to create more jobs, especially for young people.
- Cabinet is encouraged by some of the sectors such as construction, trade and transport that have created new jobs during the period under review. A social compact to rebuild and transform our economy as part of a shared responsibility will ensure we recover quickly as a country.



■ Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF)

- Cabinet expressed its deepest condolences to all families and friends of the women who were gruesomely murdered recently. These include Ms

Nosicelo Mtebeni; Ms Palesa Maruping, Ms Pheliswa "Dolly" Sawutana and many other innocent women who may not have been reported by the media.

- These heinous crimes were committed during the commemoration of Women's Month in August, which was the month to celebrate the strides we have made in bridging the gender inequalities in our society.
- These crimes have reminded all of us that GBVF remains the biggest challenge facing the country. It requires all of us to work harder to strengthen the protection of women.
- Cabinet has called on law-enforcement agencies to ensure justice is served for these women and their families.
- Government has allocated at least R21 billion to drive the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF, which seeks to put an end to the scourge. A number of interventions have been put in place to strengthen our criminal justice system. These include increasing dedicated regional courts to deal with sexual offences, strengthening our sexual offences laws and equipping our police officers with the requisite skills to deal effectively with such offences. A number of government buildings have been converted to create more shelters for women in distress.
- Cabinet calls on all of us to join hands in creating a safe and secure environment for women in the country.

To obtain assistance and counselling on GBVF matters, call the GBV Command Centre on 0800 428 428 (0800 GBV GBV). Callers can also request a social worker from the Command Centre to contact them by dialling *120*7867# (free) from any cell phone.



■ Anti-corruption campaign

- Cabinet welcomed the arrest of seven suspects in connection with the recent murder of Ms Babita Deokaran, Acting Chief Director of Financial Accounting in the Gauteng health department.
- Ms Deokaran was a dedicated public servant who stood firmly against corruption and was a key witness in a Special Investigating Unit investigation into the fraudulent procurement of personal protective equipment and other illegal activities in the department.

Cabinet reiterated that whistle-blowers are important guardians of our democracy and clean governance, and urged people to continue exposing and reporting corruption and malfeasance without fear or favour.

CABINET DECISIONS

■ Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Assessment Report

- Cabinet was briefed on the outcomes of the assessment of South Africa on its Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism measures.
- The assessment was done by the FATF, which is an intergovernmental organisation founded to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism. South Africa has been a member of the FATF since 2003.
- The full report will be released through the website of the FATF (www.fatf-gafi.org).

org), and a full statement outlining government's response on areas of weakness highlighted in the assessment and measures to strengthen its measures will be provided. Cabinet appreciated the report.

■ Dissolution of the Board of the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC)

- Cabinet concurred with the decision of Human Settlements Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi to dissolve the current Board of the NHBRC whilst the Department of Human Settlements finalises the

process of appointing a fully constituted Board. The term of the current Board expired on 31 July 2021 and was extended to 1 August 2021.

- Cabinet also concurred with the appointment of Mr Mphedziseni Alfred Radzilani as the Administrator of the NHBRC.

■ Extension of the National State of Disaster

Cabinet approved the extension of the National State of Disaster to 15 October 2021, in terms of Section 27(5) (c) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002).

UPCOMING EVENTS

■ Group of Twenty (G20) Compact with Africa

- Cabinet welcomed the outcomes of the G20 Compact with Africa meeting that was held in Berlin, Germany on 26 and 27 August 2021. Discussions focused on vaccine production in Africa, and ways in which to improve the business environment and increase investment.
- South Africa is a member of the G20 and co-chairs the G20 Compact with Africa initiative alongside Germany. President Cyril Ramaphosa also met with Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss bilateral and regional issues.

■ Tourism Month

- The country will commemorate Tourism Month in September and World Tourism Day on Monday, 27 September 2021 under the theme: "Tourism for Inclusive Growth – COVID-19 Recovery – Building Back Better."
- This year's Tourism Month will encourage South Africans to do their part in sustaining jobs by travelling domestically and supporting the recovery of tourism in line with the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, which sets out interventions to support the sector's recovery.
- Cabinet encouraged South Africans to vaccinate and explore our beautiful country while adhering to all health protocols, including the wearing of a face mask in public, washing hands regularly and maintaining social distancing.

MESSAGES

■ Congratulations

Cabinet extended its congratulations and well-wishes to:

- the South African Under-20 athletics team, for their performance at the Under-20 World Athletics Championship held in Nairobi, Kenya from 17 to 22 August 2021. Team SA amassed nine medals, including breaking the men's Under-20 4x100 metres relay world record.
- Team SA for their performance at the Tokyo Paralympics. Ntando Mahlangu won gold in the Men's Long Jump, and set a new world record with a jump of 7.17 metres. Anrune Weyers won gold for the Women's 400 metres. Para-cyclist Pieter du Preez also won gold. Louzanne Coetzee (with guide Erasmus Badenhorst) won a Paralympic silver medal in the Women's 1 500 metres.
- actress Thuso Mbedu, for winning the TV Breakout Star Award for her role in *The Underground Railroad* at the 2021 Hollywood Critics Association TV Awards.
- the newly elected President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Hakainde

Hichilema. The success of the recent presidential election provides the basis for continued stability and development in Zambia, and also in the Southern African region.

■ Condolences

Cabinet extended its heartfelt condolences the family and friends of:

- Mr Kebby Maphatsoe (59), the former Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans and current Member of Parliament. He was the National Chairperson of the uMkhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association. He dedicated his life to the development of this country.
- Ms Nobesuthu Mbadu (76), the veteran singer and original member of *The Mahotella Queens*.

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