

### ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT

#### ■ Vaccination Roll-Out Programme

- The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Sisonke vaccination roll-out programme has been extended to 54 vaccine sites across the country. The programme has to date vaccinated more than 207 808 people.
- The three phases of South Africa's Vaccination roll-out programme are as follows:
  - ✓ **Phase 1:** It is being implemented over three months from February to April 2021, to target over 1,5 million (608 295 registered) healthcare workers countrywide. The Department of Health is on track to vaccinate all healthcare workers by the end of Phase 1.
  - ✓ **Phase 2:** It will be implemented over six months, starting from May to October 2021. This phase will cover over 13 350 140 vulnerable groups, essential workers, and occupational health and safety stream – workers in sectors that are critical for economic recovery such as mines, hospitality, taxi industry, retail and spaza shops, fruit and vegetable vendors, media and other applicable beneficiaries.
  - The vaccination sites for Phases 2 and 3 will expand to 2 085 and will also include private sector sites to improve the efficiency and speed of the vaccination roll-out programme.
  - ✓ **Phase 3:** It will be implemented over three months (Nov 2021 – Feb 2022) to cover the remainder of all people in South Africa, including those who were not vaccinated in Phase 2, targeting 22 600 640 people.
- Cabinet welcomes the continual arrival of tranches of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine into the country, which is ensuring progress with implementation of the Phase 1 of the Sisonke vaccination roll-out programme.
- Cabinet remains confident of the remarkable progress being made by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) in authorising the J&J vaccine for mass vaccination. The recent approval by the SAHPRA of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine should give the country access to more lifesaving vaccines.
- Cabinet would like to reassure South Africans of the capacity of the Department of Health, in partnership with the private sector, to undertake a mass vaccine roll-out when Phase 2 gets underway.
- Cabinet also welcomed the visit to the Biovac Manuf-

turing Facility in the Western Cape on Thursday, 18 March 2021 by the Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on COVID-19 Vaccines, Deputy President David Mabuza.

- The visit assessed the facility's capabilities, infrastructure and investments to support vaccine manufacturing and development.
- The partnership between Biovac and the United States-based immunotherapy company, ImmunityBio, to develop South Africa's capability to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines, will result in ImmunityBio's second-generation COVID-19 vaccine being manufactured in the country.

**Cabinet calls on all South Africans and everyone in the country to play their part and strictly adhere to the lockdown restrictions – particularly during the upcoming Pesach, Easter and Ramadan religious celebrations – to minimise a resurgence in COVID-19 infections and prevent a potential third wave.**

- Cabinet further reiterated the importance of observing the non-pharmaceutical health protocols to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 by continuing to wear masks in public spaces, maintaining social distancing of at least 1,5 metres, always washing hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser, and avoiding large gatherings.

#### ■ Energy

- Cabinet is aware of the negative socio-economic impact, disruption and inconvenience caused by load-shedding to ordinary citizens and businesses over the past few weeks.
- Every effort is being made to resolve current energy challenges and bring new power generation capacity online in the shortest possible time, which is fundamental to South Africa's economic recovery. At the same time, government continues to support concerted efforts to stabilise Eskom and set it on a sustainable growth path.
- Cabinet welcomed the announcement by Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe of eight preferred bidders to provide an additional 2 000 megawatts of emergency electricity that will help support the national grid over the short term.



- The preferred bidders from the Independent Power Producer Programme are expected to source energy from solar, wind, liquefied natural gas and battery storage. The first connections to the grid are set for August 2022.
- The eight projects will inject R45 billion into the economy, with an average local content of 50% and create some 3 800 job opportunities during construction.
- A further 13 500 job opportunities will be created during the 20-year Purchase Power Agreement Term.
- The strategic interventions that government is making to restructure and strengthen the electricity system will fundamentally improve the country's power-generation capacity. The significant progress being made shows that our efforts to deal with the energy challenges are gathering momentum.

**Cabinet also calls on all of us to support the interventions to strengthen the performance of Eskom by reporting illegal connections, meter tampering and illicit sale of prepaid electricity vouchers to law-enforcement agencies. We must all be responsible consumers of electricity by paying our monthly bills.**

#### ■ Fee compact for universities

- Cabinet remains committed to finding a sustainable and lasting solution to the funding of higher education, to ensure that all academically deserving students are not financially excluded.
- The fee compact reached between the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and institutions of higher learning is aligned to inflation, as part of making higher education affordable.
- Cabinet is concerned about the growing historical student debt in the higher

education system. The DHET is currently collating data on the profiles of students affected by this debt, which will form part of a planned review of the student funding policy to introduce a sustainable funding model for higher education.

- In the meantime, Cabinet encourages institutions of higher learning to engage with their student bodies to find solutions that will allow more students to register.
- Cabinet welcomed the speedy investigation and arrest of the four police officers for allegedly killing Mr Mthokozisi Ntumba (35) during the recent student protests outside Wits University in Johannesburg. Furthermore, Cabinet welcomed the arrest of those responsible for public violence and continued attacks on police during the protests.
- Cabinet respects the constitutional right to peaceful protest within the confines of the law. However, law-enforcement agencies will not allow criminal elements to take advantage of legitimate protests and cause mayhem by burning and destroying private and public property.

#### ■ Police killings

- Cabinet remains concerned about the reported attacks on members of the South African Police Service. Police officers put their lives at risk

daily to ensure the safety of our communities and the country.

- Over the past month, since 25 February 2021, a total of 12 police officers were brutally murdered on and off duty in different parts of the country.
- All acts of violence and murder directed against police officers are not only cowardly but also unpatriotic, and should not be tolerated in our society. Cabinet calls on law-enforcement agencies to ensure that justice is seen to be done for the fallen police officers.
- As a law-abiding and peace-loving society, let us all demonstrate our revulsion towards police killings by reporting all perpetrators and fugitives to law-enforcement agencies. The death of a police officer is one too many.

#### ■ Human Rights Day

- Cabinet thanked all South Africans who joined in the country's Human Rights Day celebrations on Sunday, 21 March 2021 under the theme: "The Year of Charlotte Maxeke: Promoting Human Rights in the Age of COVID-19".
- This year's commemoration coincides with the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.
- The day reminded us of our moral duty as a nation to continue the fight against racism, sexism, xenophobia and all related intolerances, including gender-based violence and remnants of police brutality.

**Cabinet called on all South Africans to use the remaining days of the Human Rights Month to foster greater social cohesion, nation-building and a shared national identity.**



### CABINET DECISIONS

#### ■ Draft National Data and Cloud Policy

- Cabinet approved the gazetting of the Draft National Data and Cloud Policy for public comment. The policy seeks to align existing policies and legislation to ensure that the country takes full advantage of developments in the digital economy.
- Data and Cloud services are key enablers for the digital economy. The policy also seeks to ensure the country fully participates in the new data era. Once adopted, the policy will also strengthen the capacity of the State to deliver services to its citizens.

#### ■ Draft Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) towards the global response to climate change

- Cabinet approved the updated draft NDC towards the response to climate change

for public consultation. The Paris Agreement on climate change requires South Africa to submit periodic NDCs which outline a target to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

- Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015, South Africa has made significant progress in moving towards the development and implementation of its NDCs.
- The updated draft NDC takes into account South Africa's national circumstances, legal requirements of the Paris Agreement, equity and latest science.

#### ■ IMC on the 2023 Netball World Cup (NWC)

- Cabinet approved the establishment of the IMC on the 2023 NWC for the hosting of the 2023 NWC. The IMC will drive the preparatory work towards the event.
- South Africa, which will be the first country in Africa to



host the NWC, will host 16 competing nations.

#### ■ International Philately Exhibition (IPEX)

- Cabinet approved the hosting of the IPEX, also known as the stamps exhibition, in Cape Town from 9 to 19 December 2021 under the theme: "Road to Democracy". The Federation of International de Philatelie (FIP) initially planned to stage the event in Cape Town from 17 to 20 March 2021 but it was moved to the later date due

to COVID-19.

- The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies will organise and host the event in collaboration with the FIP organising committee.
- Stamps collected will display historic moments, individuals and events that contributed in enhancing democracy in South Africa. The anticipated visitors will contribute towards the country's tourism, boost local economy, and promote culture and social cohesion.

#### ■ Science, Technology and Innovation Decadal Implementation Plan (STI Decadal Plan)

- Cabinet approved the STI Decadal Strategic Plan 2021-2031 for science and innovation implementation. The plan follows the *White Paper on Science and Innovation* that was approved by Cabinet in 2019.
- The policy responds to the rapid technological advancement and harnesses STI for the socio-economic development of the country.
- This Decadal Plan will serve as a government master plan, which will incorporate other departments such as departments of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development; Mineral Resources and Energy; Health, and Trade, Industry and Competition. The implementation will be in collaboration with all the relevant departments.

### UPCOMING EVENT

#### ■ President's Virtual Reading Club

- **When:** Thursday, 25 March 2021.
- **Time:** 16:30 to 18:30.
- **Platform:** Microsoft Teams webinar (<https://nrc.org.za/>).
- Cabinet encouraged South Africans to join the fourth session of the President's Reading Club.
- This session will read South African literary classics *The Suit* by Can Themba and *I am not a Tramp* by Leslie Sehume.
- Since its launch in 2019, the National Reading Coalition has supported the Read to Lead Campaign and President Cyril Ramaphosa's call to improve reading nationally – from the classroom to the living room.
- By working together we can build on this foundational skill and create access to career opportunities.

### MESSAGES

#### ■ Congratulations

*Cabinet extended its congratulations and well-wishes to:*

- **Dr Patrice Motsepe**, the renowned businessman who became the first South African to be elected as President of the Confederation of African Football.
- Cabinet also wished all South Africans a happy and safe Easter holiday, and the religious communities a respectful and spiritual Pesach.

#### ■ Condolences

*Cabinet expressed condolences to the family and friends of:*

- **His Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu**, who was the longest serving monarch of the Zulu Kingdom. President Ramaphosa accorded His Majesty a Special Official Funeral: Category 1 status, which included elements of military honours. His Majesty will be



remembered as a visionary monarch who united the Zulu people, traditional leaders and contributed to the prosperity of AmaZulu.

- **His Excellency President John Pombe Magufuli** of the United Republic of Tanzania. South Africa is united in grief with the government and people of Tanzania as they go through this difficult time. In paying tribute to President Magufuli, President Ramaphosa said: "We owe so much of our freedom to the generosity and the sacrifices of the people of Tanzania. It is this

shared past that makes us, as South Africans, feel the loss of President Magufuli all the more deeply and all the more personally. Tanzania has lost a father and a brother, Africa has lost a visionary leader, and South Africa has lost a dear friend."

- **Mr Menzi Ngubane**, the award-winning veteran actor who was an exceptional performer and a great artist. He contributed immensely to the development of the performance art, both on and off our television (TV) screens. His work as an artist continues to inspire many in the arts industry.
- **Ms Noxolo Maqashalala**, who was a brilliant young actress who graced our TV screens with her display of exceptional talent.
- **Dr Nawal El Saadawi**, an Egyptian feminist, human rights activist, author and psychiatrist. She contributed to the fight against the oppression of women based on culture, religion and soci-

etal class structures through her writings and activism. She was world-renowned for her work against the practice of female genital mutilation.

- **Mr Pathasarvasan Govender**, also known as "Charm Govender", a Struggle activist from Chatsworth in KwaZulu-Natal, who was a member of the Natal Indian Congress and an African National Congress (ANC) underground activist.
- **Mr Cecyl Esau**, who was a Struggle stalwart and a former Robben Island political prisoner and a former member of the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Mr Esau spent his entire youth and adult life fighting for a free, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa.

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