

Cabinet Statement

Statement on the Cabinet Meeting of Wednesday, 13 March 2024



ISSUES FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMY

Trade matters

- Cabinet welcomes the adoption by the African Union Assembly of key protocols and decisions affecting the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). These included the first ever Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade, as well as Protocols on Investment and Digital Trade.

The Assembly, attended by President Cyril Ramaphosa, also agreed to a number of rules of origin on clothing and certain automobile products, as finalised by the AfCFTA Council of Ministers. Cabinet congratulates the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Competition for the work done to enable the start of trade under the AfCFTA preferences, with the first consignment of goods destined for Ghana and Kenya.



The Fisheries Subsidies Agreement. South Africa became the 71st WTO Member to ratify the agreement and was honoured by having its submission done at a special ceremony in the closing session of MC13. Cabinet welcomes the accession by two countries to membership of the WTO, namely Timor-Leste and Comoros; and agreement for a gradual (rather than immediate) phase out of benefits of countries which graduate from 'least developed country' status.

- Cabinet notes the outcome of the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and welcomes the acceptance by the WTO of South Africa's instrument of ratification of

- Cabinet notes with concern that a number of key development goals of African countries were not concluded due to opposition by larger and developed economies. These relate to policy space for industrialisation

by developing countries, an agriculture agreement that provides greater access to developed country markets and opportunities for farmers in the global south, further measures to avoid over-fishing and steps to roll back unilateral and unjustified green protectionism measures such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism of the European Union.

- Cabinet also notes the visit undertaken to the People's Republic of China by the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition to drum up support for new investment in South African manufacturing, including in the auto value-chain. The visit included meetings with the world's largest electric vehicle (EV) producers and the largest EV battery manufacturers, steel and energy firms and South African companies operating in China in sectors such as chemicals, medical insurance, pharmaceuticals, mining and finance. During the visit, Minister Ebrahim Patel attended a ceremony at the Zheng He Memorial in Nanjing, to pay tribute to a great Chinese seafarer, who visited the African continent during the 5th Voyage of the Treasure Fleet (1417-1419), establishing contact between trading ports in east Africa. China is today one of Africa's largest trading partners, building on an initiative of more than 600 years ago.

TOURISM

Progress Report on increasing the volume and value of Domestic and International Tourism

- Cabinet was apprised about the working progress to increase the volume and value of Domestic and International Tourism.

The recent official release by Statistics South Africa of international arrival figures from January to December 2023 underscores the rising momentum of the South African tourism sector as the international tourist arrivals for this period totalled 8.5 million a remarkable increase of 48.9% increase compared to 2022.

Addressing the backlog on tour operator licences

- Cabinet received progress report on addressing backlogs on tour operator licences.
- The Department of Tourism will partner with relevant institutions and structures, including the Department of Transport's Interim National Public Transport Regulator Committee, to ensure improvement and more quicker turnaround times in the processing of tour operator licences.
- The plans include partnering with department of transport on establishing a call centre on handling tour operator queries.
- The Minister of Transport issued an instruction to provincial and local law-enforcement officials to stop penalising tour operators who are awaiting responses to their applications.

INTERNATIONAL MATTERS



Palestine (A Better Africa and a Better World)

- Our heart goes out to the Palestinian people due to the ongoing loss of life and the needless suffering. Cabinet calls for an immediate end to hostilities. We are hopeful that South Africa's urgent application to the International Court of Justice will bring an end to the conflict and allow space for the delivery of much-needed humanitarian aid. South Africa's application is intended to ensure that all fighting and hostilities are ended, and that all hostages and detainees are released immediately, and the blockade of Gaza is lifted.
- South Africa reaffirms that the only solution to peace is the implementation of the 'Two-State Solution'.

South Africa-Ghana Binational Commission (BNC)

- Cabinet welcomed engagements at the South Africa-Ghana BNC that strengthened cooperation between the two countries.
- The two nations discussed on fostering greater trade ties and African economic integration through preferential trading under the AfCFTA. On 31 January 2024, South Africa sent its first shipment to Ghana and other countries under the AfCFTA Agreement.
- Ghana remains an important economic partner for South Africa. Over the past 10 years, South African companies have undertaken over 170 projects in Ghana, valued at about USD\$1.4 billion in capital investment. South African companies are also actively involved in the Ghanaian mining industry.

SAFETY AND SECURITY



Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) and child protection

- As the world commemorated International Women's Day on Friday, 8 March 2024, Cabinet reiterated its call on South African men to stand up and fight the scourge of GBVF. We call on men to take part in the 365 Days of No Violence against Women and Children Campaign.
- It simply cannot be the norm that 30 years into our democracy women and children

live in fear of being the next victim. This damning situation goes against the founding values of our constitutional democracy, which is built on human rights, human dignity and equality for all.

- Cabinet expressed concern about the safety of children following recent cases of child kidnappings in different parts of the country. Parents and caregivers must be extra vigilant regarding the safety and whereabouts of children in their care and should educate children on general safety precautions. In the spirit of Ubuntu, communities are urged to assist with taking care of children.
- Cabinet applauded police and the community of Saldanha Bay in the Western Cape for the arrest of suspects in connection with the missing six-year-old Joslin Smith.
- Cabinet joins the nation in prayer and efforts for the safe return of many other children who have gone missing in the recent past. Cabinet calls on persons with

any information on all missing children to contact their nearest police station or call Crime Stop at 08600 10111 immediately.

Ethekwini illegal municipal strike

- Cabinet is concerned about the illegal protest action by Ethekwini municipal workers, which has seen violence as well as water and power outages.
- The impact of the strike has seen many residents without water, electricity and waste removal, which is infringement of rights of people and a contravention of the Constitution. Such behaviour will not be tolerated and Cabinet calls on law-enforcement agencies to do all what it takes to protect the rights of people.
- The closing of critical services such as clinics is tantamount to homicide and those found in such acts will face the full might of the law.

UPDATES TO CABINET

PUBLIC SERVICE



Submission of South Africa's Open Government Partnership (OGP) 5th Action Plan, as part of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) National Plan of Action Implementation

- Cabinet was updated about South Africa's submission of the OGP 5th Action Plan, as part of the APRM National Plan of Action Implementation under the theme: "Consolidating the Revival of the OGP Process in South Africa - OGP 5th National Plan of Action 2023 - 2026".

- The OGP is an organisation of reformers inside and outside of government working to transform how government serves its citizens. In OGP, governments and civil society co-create two-year action plans, with concrete steps and commitments across a broad range of issues. This model allows civil-society organisations to help shape and oversee governments. In South Africa's latest action plan, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is working with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and other relevant departments on issues related to innovation to improve service delivery.
- This enables South Africa to generate a significant amount of data that is useful to citizens as it relates to open and transparent government. The OGP 5th National Plan of Action 2023-2026 will serve as a mechanism to implement the APRM National Plan of Action in line with the Cabinet-endorsed principle of governance programmes that are complementing each other.

Progress Report on Completing Lifestyle Audits for members of Senior Management Service (SMS)

- Cabinet received a Progress Report on Lifestyle Audits of members of the SMS.

- At the end of January 2023, 24 national departments and 71 provincial departments reported that they concluded lifestyle audits. With further interventions, the number of compliant departments increased at the end of March 2023 to 36 national government departments and 89 provincial departments.
- This progress is a significant part of measures to address corruption within the Public Service and its professionalisation.

Progress Report on the Intervention Undertaken to address the Disciplinary Case Backlog within the Public Service

- Cabinet received a Progress Report on the intervention undertaken to address the Disciplinary Case Backlog within the Public Service.
- At the time the project commenced on 1 October 2023, the seven national departments had 250 long overdue cases and the 20 provincial departments had 172 long overdue cases.
- With the assistance of the DPSA, the seven national departments could resolve or uplift 133 suspensions out of the 250 cases a finalisation rate of 53%, whilst the 20 provincial departments resolved 68 out of the 172 cases, a

- 40% resolution rate.
- Cabinet directed the DPSA to ensure the strengthening of Case Management Process across government.

Report on the Establishment of a Central Register for Discipline across the three spheres of government

- Cabinet received a progress report on the establishment of a Central Register for Discipline across the three spheres of government.
- The establishment of a Central Register for Discipline across the three spheres of government is one of the actions contained in the response by President Ramaphosa to the Recommendations of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud as submitted to Parliament on 22 October 2022.
- Cabinet noted progress on the work done for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 January 2024.
- The alpha version of the central register has been developed and tested on an existing web-based application, the process to finalise it is underway.

EDUCATION



Report on the Establishment of Two New Higher Education Institutions

- Cabinet received a report on the progress towards the establishment of the University of Science and Innovation in Ekurhuleni and the University on Crime Prevention and Policing Studies in Hammanskraal.
- This initiative is aimed at both alleviating the shortage of institutions of higher education and ensuring that higher education and training is responsive to train graduates that are equipped to deal with socio-economic needs of the country.

AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Report on the development of the cannabis and hemp sector and the Cannabis Master Plan

- Cabinet received a progress report on the development of the cannabis and hemp sector and the Cannabis Master Plan as part of government's strategy to industrialise the cannabis sector.
- The aim is to provide a framework for the establishment, growth and development of the cannabis and hemp industry in South Africa in order to contribute to economic growth, poverty alleviation and job creation.
- In 2020, the Minister of Health approved changes to the scheduling of cannabis plants under the Medicines and Related Substances Act, 1965 (Act 101 of 1965) as amended, and the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development declared hemp as an agricultural crop in terms of the Plant Improvement Act, 1976 (Act 53 of 1976).
- The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) continues to develop hemp

varieties, with the support of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), to make the seeds available for the 2025 planting season.

- The Department of Health (DoH), through the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority, is currently consulting on further changes to the schedules of the Medicines and Related Substances Act for purposes of allowing the DoH to regulate cannabis for all medicinal uses, whilst the DALRRD will regulate the cultivation and processing of cannabis and hemp for all other legitimate uses such as industrial, cosmetic, human and food products applications.

Report on the vaccine production capability at Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) and ARC

- Cabinet received an update on the progress made on Vaccine Production Capability at OBP and ARC for purposes of ensuring that vaccines are available to prevent and control

animal diseases that impact food security, human health and livelihoods.

- Cabinet was notified of the plans to fast-track the timeframes for the commencement and finalisation of the construction phase of the new Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) facility to restore South Africa's capability to prepare FMD vaccines from relevant strains for annual vaccination campaigns and use during outbreak emergencies. This will eliminate the use of imported commercial vaccines.

Progress on acceleration of implementation of land reform

- Cabinet received and considered the progress report on the acceleration of the implementation of land reform in the country. The Acceleration of Land Reform Programme is an outcome of the accepted Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture that presented its Report and Recommendations to Cabinet in 2019.

The various land reform acceleration programmes continue to be implemented and the progress was reported to Cabinet as follows:

- Through the provisions of the Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act of 1998, 593 167 hectares have been transferred.
- The Rapid Release of state land has been completed with the release and allocation of 659 602 agricultural state land.
- The Land Claims Commission has settled 83 056 claims as at December 2023, a total of 3 889 701 hectares of land were acquired at a cost of R25 billion, and financial compensation of R23 billion was awarded to beneficiaries.
- The restitution programme has so far benefited 2 345 547 individual beneficiaries who are members of 460 952 households. Of these households, 177 504 are female-headed households and 1 266 are households headed by persons with disabilities.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant (ISUPG) Framework/Policy and progress with implementation

- Cabinet received progress report on the implementation of the ISUPG Framework/Policy that was introduced in the 2019/20 financial year.
- The objective of the grant is to provide the means for households to receive basic services such as water, electricity, roads, stormwater, refuse removal and sanitation services.
- The target was to upgrade 1 500 informal settlements and the progress reported is as follows:

- 578 informal settlements went through Phase 1 activities which entailed the business plan and pre-feasibility details of the upgrading of the informal settlements.
- 1 497 informal settlements went through Phase 2 activities which focus

on Security of Tenure and includes the acquisition of land and installation of interim services, basic water and sanitation services pending the formalisation of the settlement, and

- 197 informal settlements were fully upgraded.

Progress on strategic Mega Raw Water Resource Augmentation projects

- Cabinet received a progress report on four strategic Mega Raw Water Resource Augmentation projects executed by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS).
- Cabinet was informed that raising of the Hazelmeere Dam project was successfully completed at a cost of R820 million, increasing the storage capacity of the dam from 23.9 million m³ to 43.6 million m³, an increase of 83%.
- To enable this additional stored water to be treated and supplied to the City

of eThekweni, the uMngeni-uThukela Water Board has completed a project to increase the capacity of the Hazelmeere Water Treatment Works from 55 to 75 million litres per day, at a cost of R135 million.

- It will further increase the capacity of the treatment works to 90 ML per day within the next three years at a cost of R25 million.
- Umzimvubu Water Project: The project implementation was delayed for many years by lack of funding. However, the access roads to the dam, which is 84%, complete, and work is expected to be completed by June 2024. The construction of the dam is at 6%, and construction is expected to be completed in 2028.
- The Raising of the Wall of the Tzaneen Dam by three metres will increase the storage capacity of the dam from 157,3 million m³ to 193 million m³ which is a 23% increase. The implementation

is at 40% and construction is expected to be completed in March 2025, at a cost of R555 million.

- The Raising of the Clanwilliam Dam Wall Project in the Western Cape is aimed at meeting the need for additional water for agricultural development, which includes the resource-poor farmers. The dam wall is being increased by 13 metres to increase its storage capacity from 122 million m³ to 343 m³, which is an increase of 181%. The project is currently at 34% construction and anticipated to be completed in April 2028, at an estimated cost of R3.92 billion.

National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES)

- Cabinet has considered and noted the review of the NBES, which aims to leverage the biodiversity economy to promote conservation, and species and ecosystems management. This strategy will also promote growth and transfor-

mation in the biodiversity sector.

- The NBES is fully aligned with the goals of the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity, which are Conservation, Sustainable Use, Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits and Transformation.
- The NBES will be thoroughly discussed at the upcoming Biodiversity Economy and Investment Indaba to be hosted by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) from 25 to 27 March 2024, at Birchwood Hotel, in Gauteng. President Ramaphosa will address the Indaba on 26 March 2024. The Indaba will bring together a range of stakeholders in the biodiversity sector including government officials, traditional leaders and healers, academia, business, communities and youth structures.

CABINET DECISIONS

Establishment of a United Nations (UN) Habitat Country Programme and office in South Africa

- Cabinet approved the establishment of a UN Habitat Country Programme and Office in South Africa.
- The establishment of a Habitat Country Programme will support South Africa's national priorities of spatial transformation, urban development, housing and sustainable human settlements.
- The programme will provide sustainable global expertise and advice, access to leading knowledge resources, and multi-partner interventions for safer, resilient, inclusive, prosperous and connected human settlements, as envisaged in the National Development Plan (NDP) and the draft White Paper on Human Settlements.
- UN-Habitat will provide policy, programme development, capacity-building and training support, and implement specific projects in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

National Policy on Comprehensive Producer Development Support (NPPCDS)

- Cabinet approved the NPPCDS for implementation. The policy's main objective is to regulate and guide the provision of support measures to the various categories of producers, thereby contributing to the restoration of the natural resources, a sustainable, transformed and competitive agricultural sector.
- It further aims to guide government's interventions and support that is provided to various categories of agricultural producers. Producer support programmes in the country are currently fragmented and are located at various institutions of government. The new policy is therefore designed to bring together producer support from both government and private sectors in a coordinated manner.

The policy proposes measures to build the capacity of producers and officials in the agricultural sector and introduces environmentally friendly production practices. This is to ensure that South Africa protects and improves the use of scarce natural resources such as land, water, biodiversity and genetic resources by advocating for and supporting environmentally friendly agricultural production.

- The policy further makes proposals to introduce targeted financial support such as grant funding and loans to address the needs of producers. These interventions will reduce inequality and improve the participation of black producers in the agricultural value chain. Members of the public can access the policy on www.dalrrd.gov.za.

Industry Waste Tyre Management Plan (IndWTMP)

- Cabinet has approved the IndWTMP for implementation. This follows a comprehensive, multi-year, development process which included various rounds of public consultation.
- The IndWTMP provides a plan to divert 100% of new waste tyres from storage while simultaneously targeting the processing of existing stockpiles. This will be done through the development of additional waste tyre processing capacity which will be supported by government through market development initiatives. Waste tyre collections will also be expanded, supported by the more efficient and effective management of transport and depot operation services by regional implementers.
- The IndWTMP also provides additional entrepre-

neurial opportunities for township SMMEs in line with the National Township Economy Revitalisation Policy and Implementation Plan with its strong focus on youth, women, and persons with disabilities. These opportunities include the planned expansion of micro-collection and micro-depot networks to all nine provinces.

- SMMEs will be supported by the DFFE and the Department of Small Business Development to take advantage of opportunities stemming from the expansion and more effective delivery of the waste tyre value chain. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two departments on SMME support will be expanded to specifically include waste tyres.
- The plan is available on the website of the DFFE: www.dffe.gov.za.

Termination of South African Airways (SAA)'s deal with strategic equity partner Takato

- Cabinet supported the termination of the SAA partnership with Takato. This follows after almost three years of negotiations, government's talks with the Takato Consortium as a private equity partner for the SAA have concluded.
- With a public asset, government had to prioritise that fair value and the public interest was served. SAA's assets are now worth far more than they were during the COVID-19 pandemic when Takato was selected as the preferred bidder.
- SAA will continue to operate as a government-owned entity and is in a position to continue to operate in its current form for the short term.

National Security Strategy

- In compliance with the National Strategic Intelligence Act, 1994 (Act 39 of 1994), Cabinet consid-

ered and approved the National Security Strategy as prepared by the National Intelligence Coordinating Committee (NICC), which will form the basis for the development National Strategic Intelligence Policy.

National Intelligence Estimate and National Intelligence Priorities

- In compliance with the National Strategic Intelligence Act of 1994, Cabinet considered the National Intelligence Estimates and approved the National Intelligence Priorities as prepared by the NICC.

30 Years of Freedom and Democracy

- South Africa is marking 30 years since the historic election of 27 April 1994. The commemoration of this milestone in the trajectory of our developmental democracy requires a countrywide approach.
- Cabinet approved the implementation of 30 years of freedom and democracy communication campaign both domestically and internationally. All spheres of government, stakeholders, social partners will collaborate and individually implement the aligned communication campaign.
- The campaign to celebrate the 30 years of freedom and democracy aims to:

- ✓ Mobilise the country to celebrate the gains, achievements and the milestone of 30 years of democratic rule and living in a free and democratic society.
- ✓ highlight the achievements of the democratic government since 1994.
- ✓ highlight and profile the progress of individuals, communities and the country which has been enabled by the democratic dispensation.
- The campaign has four pillars: (i) The people (ii) The Government (iii) Freedom for all, and (iv) The festivities.

BILL



Immigration Amendment Bill of 2023

- Cabinet approved the submission of the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2023 to Parliament. The purpose of the Bill is to give effect to the Constitutional Court's judgements delivered on 29 June 2017 and 30 October 2023 respectively.
- The Bill seeks to address the two Constitutional Court judgements by amending Section 34(1)(b) and (d) of the principal Act, so as to ensure that any illegal foreigner detained under Section 34(1) of the principal Act is brought before a court in person, within 48 hours from the time of his or her arrest, in order for the court to determine whether, it is in the interests of justice to order further detention, for purposes of deportation.
- The Bill addresses the interests of justice criterion to be applied by the immigration officer and the court.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Human Rights Day

- The commemoration of the national Human Rights Day will take place at the George Thabane Stadium in Sharpeville, Gauteng on Thursday, 21 March 2024.
- The national Human Rights Day commemorates the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, where peaceful protesters marching against discriminatory pass laws were fatally shot by the apartheid police and others who were wounded.
- Hosting the event in Sharpeville symbolises government's commitment to honour the sacrifices made by those who fought and died for our liberation in Sharpeville and other communities throughout South Africa.

World Water Day

- South Africa remains a water-scarce country and the upcoming National Water Week from 20 to 26 March 2024 will promote heightened awareness to empower and educate citizens about their responsibility to conserve water.

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day

- The commemoration of the annual World TB Day on Sunday, 24 March 2024 is a sobering reminder that TB remains one of the leading causes of ill

health and deaths in South Africa.

- South Africa remains among the nations hardest hit by TB and we also face the challenge of TB patients not completing their treatment. This challenge is further compounded by many cases of TB being either multi-drug resistant or extensively drug resistant.
- However, despite these challenges, TB can be cured and treatment options are available. If you have a fever, are losing weight, have been coughing for more than two weeks, get tested for TB as soon as possible.

Black Industrialists Conference

- The second edition of the Black Industrialists and Exporters Conference is scheduled to take place at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg on Wednesday, 20 March 2024.
- The conference will recognise business excellence and honour enterprises that

as a lecturer at the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology, he created the Ultralight Systems Laboratory, which was dedicated to experimental research on ultra-light materials.

the 13 people who lost their lives in a collision involving a bus and a truck at the Hex River Mountain Pass in the Western Cape on Saturday, 9 March 2024.

- Ms Ongeziwe Kamana (17), a Grade 12 learner at the Fizeka High School in Gugulethu, Cape Town, who went missing on Saturday, 17 February 2024 and her charred body was later found inside a burnt-down bungalow in Kuils River.

MESSAGES

Congratulations

Cabinet extended its congratulations and well-wishes to:

- Dr Phil Mjwara, the Director-General of the Department of Science and Innovation, for being awarded the Presidential Award during the 10th annual South African Medical Research Council Merit Awards held in Cape Town on Thursday, 7 March 2024. He was honoured for his visionary leadership in promoting science in South Africa and abroad.
- Prof Busani Ngcaweni, Principal of the National School of Government, for being elected as the Secretary-General of the African Management Development Institutes' Network.

Team South Africa, for beating New Zealand in the final of the Over-40 Cricket World Cup in Cape Town on Friday, 1 March 2024.

- Mr Shaun Maswanganyi, South African sprinting sensation, who set a new South African record in the men's 200 metres short track at an indoor track and field event in Texas over the weekend. Maswanganyi clocked 20.41 seconds to eclipse the record previously held mark of 20.45 seconds by Nincolilli Titi, which had stood since 2018.
- Dr Claire Anne Minnaar, internationally acclaimed South African doctor, and her colleagues from the Wits Donald

Gordon Medical Centre University. Their breakthrough research in cervical cancer could bring hope to millions of women.

- Dr Johan 'Rassie' Erasmus, for an honorary doctorate bestowed upon him by the University of North West.

Condolences

Cabinet expressed condolences to the family and friends of:

- Prof Edward Webster (82), the leading sociologist, academic and labour activist, who held various teaching and research positions in some of the country's leading universities. He was instrumental in training several generations

of left-wing scholars, many of whom are now leading academics, trade unionists, researchers and policy analysts.

- Prof Mulalo Reuben Doyoyo (53), a well-known inventor, engineer and professor who occupied leadership positions at a young age, being the head boy at Mbulwi Secondary School in 1966 and 1968. He became a publication officer of the Student Engineering Institute of Aerospace Engineers whilst he was a student at the University of the Western Cape. After completing his two Master's degrees in 1995 and 1996, he furthered his post-doctoral research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Whilst working

