

Cabinet Statement



On Wednesday, 21 April 2021, Cabinet held its first physical meeting since the introduction of the national lockdown in 2020. This is part of Cabinet transitioning itself to the new normal as the country continues to reopen itself.

ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Temporary suspension of the Sisonke Vaccination Programme and the recommendation to lift it

- Cabinet was briefed on the temporary suspension of the Johnson and Johnson (J&J) Sisonke Vaccination Programme, which was a precautionary measure which allowed South Africa's scientists to review the South African data on the J&J vaccine.
- This followed the suspension of the J&J vaccination roll-out programme in the United States of America (USA) after six people who received the J&J vaccine developed a rare type of blood clot.
- Another reason for the temporary suspension was the decision by J&J to voluntarily suspend the roll-out of their vaccine in the Eurozone.
- The temporary suspension in South Africa was in line with government's commitment to ensure that comprehensive safety measures are undertaken regarding the vaccine roll-out. The reviewed data had confirmed that South Africa had not experienced any rare blood clots with the already vaccinated healthcare workers (HCWs).
- Cabinet welcomed the recommendation by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority to lift the suspension of the J&J Sisonke Vaccination Programme.
- Our scientists will continue to monitor all South Africans as and when they are vaccinated. By mid-April 2021, more than 292 623 HCWs had been vaccinated under the Sisonke Vaccination Programme.



- to the non-pharmaceutical health protocols of:
 - wearing a mask when in public spaces;
 - maintaining social distancing of about 1.5 metres;
 - always washing hands with soap and water; or
 - using a 70% alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- However, the report also indicated a slight increase of 4.9% in persons testing positive in the past 14 days, by 18 April 2021. The cases increased from 14 113 in the preceding 14 days to 14 807 cases in the last 14 days.
- The slight increase in cases is attributed to cluster resurgences in the Free State and Northern Cape, and rapid response teams have been activated to conduct contact tracing.

Economic recovery

- Cabinet welcomed the 2021 Annual Front Office Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Omnibus Survey, which ranked South Africa first in the world as a destination for BPO.
- The survey extended to over 600 executives from eight key sourcing markets, including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom (UK) and the USA.
- This affirms the proactive work of government and the sector in building the country's BPO capacity, with a strong growth in call centres, technical support and back and front office services for major multinational and South African firms.

The country's sophisticated digital infrastructure, skilled workforce, knowledge in technology and financial services, and proficiency in English, continue to make it an attractive destination for BPO.

Job creation

- Cabinet is pleased that a number of government interventions to stimulate the participation of more South Africans in the economy, particularly young people, are starting to yield results.
- The Presidential Employment Stimulus that was launched in October 2020 to respond to the economic impact of COVID-19 created or retained 360 010 jobs by the end of February 2021, mostly for unemployed youth. In addition, the employment stimulus has supported the livelihoods of 60 539 beneficiaries through the transfer of support, including production vouchers for subsistence farmers.
- Over 300 000 of these opportunities came from placing young people as assistants in schools across the country, through the Basic Education Employment Initiative. These school assistants have played an important role in

strengthening the learning environment at schools during a difficult time.

Infrastructure development

- Cabinet appreciated the progress made in enhancing the efficiency and competitiveness of the Port of Durban that has resulted in a significant reduction of congestion and improved turnaround times.
- His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa, visited the Port of Durban on Thursday, 15 April 2021 to assess progress with port infrastructure improvement following his meeting with port users and stakeholders in October 2019.
- Improving the performance of South Africa's ports, particularly the Port of Durban, is central to government's objective of maintaining South Africa's position amongst the largest and most efficient trading ports, and strengthens our position as the gateway for the region and the continent.
- Cabinet also welcomed the report from an oversight visit to the Saldanha Bay Harbour in the Western Cape by Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Patricia de Lille – along with Deputy Minister Nxolo Kiviet and Dr Kgosisentso Ramokgopa, Head of Investment and Infrastructure in The Presidency – on Tuesday, 6 April 2021.
- The Small Harbours Repairs and Maintenance Programme, which is a Strategic Integrated Project as part of the Infrastructure Investment Plan approved by Cabinet in May 2020, is currently 77% complete. It has created a total of 611 job opportunities and various local small, medium and micro enterprises have benefited to the value of R55 million. The project is expected to be completed in March 2022.

Monthly statistical reports

- Statistics South Africa continues to release a number of monthly reports on the performance of various sectors of the economy. Although some sectors continue to battle with the recovery, the resilience of the agriculture, manufacturing and mining industries continues to inspire confidence in the recovery of the South African economy.
- Cabinet is pleased that the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) is making a noticeable impact in South Africa's recovery.

Bullying at schools

- Cabinet expressed concern about the prevalence of bullying in our schools, which included the recent incidents at Mbilwi Secondary School in Thohoyandou, Limpopo, Dinwiddie High School in Germiston, Gauteng and Mathole High School in Kwa-

Zulu-Natal.

- Cabinet was saddened by the death of Lufuno Mavhunga (15) from Mbilwi Secondary School in Thohoyandou, Limpopo, and conveyed condolences to the Mavhunga family and her friends. Cabinet called on authorities to speedily investigate the matter and ensure effective justice.
- Cabinet urged education stakeholders, including parents and guardians, to unite against bullying to create an environment that is conducive to learning.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to speak up and report incidents of bullying to the relevant authorities, particularly where the victims are unable or afraid to do so.

Hate crimes

- Cabinet strongly condemned the recent rise of LGBTIQ+ hate crimes that resulted in the deaths of Andile Ntuthela, Siphamandla Khoza and Nathaniel Mbele.
- The Bill of Rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 calls on us to respect the rights of all members of society without any form of discrimination.
- These heinous crimes and acts of harassment have no place in our democracy, and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms by all of us.

Cabinet called on anyone who may assist with the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators of these crimes to contact the police through the toll-free number 10111 or visit the nearest police station.

African Swine Fever (ASF) and Avian Influenza

- Cabinet noted the outbreak of ASF on a farm in Potchefstroom in North West as well as Avian Influenza (bird flu) on a commercial farm in the East Rand in Gauteng.
- The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and other relevant stakeholders have promptly stepped up security measures and imposed a quarantine.
- ASF is a contagious disease that only affects domestic and wild pigs. Avian Influenza affects poultry and cannot be transmitted to humans.

Firefighting operations

- Cabinet applauded the efforts of rescue personnel and firefighters who bravely worked around the clock to contain fires in Cape Town and at Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital in Johannesburg respectively.
- The Cape Town fires have destroyed historic buildings

while the fire at Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital necessitated the transfer of more than 400 patients to other hospitals.

- Cabinet wished those injured in the fires a speedy recovery. Investigations to determine the cause of these fires have already started.

Mozambique conflict

- Cabinet welcomed the efforts of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to bring about lasting peace and security, as well as reconciliation and development, in the Republic of Mozambique.
- An Extraordinary Double Troika Summit of Heads of State and Government of the SADC held on Thursday, 8 April 2020 in Maputo directed an immediate technical deployment to Mozambique.
- Cabinet is also satisfied that South African citizens in Mozambique have been offered consular assistance through the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's 24-hour Consular Command Centre. A number of South African nationals have returned while others have been moved to safe areas in Mozambique.

Senseless killing of the Coka brothers

- Cabinet condemned the recent senseless killing of two brothers, Zenzele and Amos Coka, on a farm in Mpumalanga. The siblings were part of a group of farm dwellers seeking employment as seasonal farmworkers.
- Cabinet commended police for the quick response in arresting the alleged offenders who have since appeared at the Piet Retief Magistrate's Court.

Cabinet called for calm in the community to allow justice to take its course and ensure that those found guilty face the full might of the law.

Resolution on the protesters in Cape Town

- The Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, briefed Cabinet on the progress made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to resolve the issue relating to the protesters in Cape Town, who are mainly citizens from the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- The protesters were temporarily sheltered in Paint City and Wingfield in Cape Town under the COVID-19 National State of Disaster regulations.
- The UNHCR offered to help all protesters to resettle in communities in and around Cape Town. The International Organisation for Migration also offered those who wish to return to their country of origin a plane ticket. Cabinet welcomes this generous and reasonable offer, and urges the protesters to accept it.

To prepare for Phase 2 of the vaccination roll-out programme starting on 17 May 2021, Cabinet encourages people aged 60 years and older to register on the Electronic Vaccination Data System: <https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za>. People without access to the internet can register in person at over 3 338 vaccination sites across the country. Mobile teams will also be deployed to assist the elderly, the homeless and people living in rural areas.

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) infection rates

- Cabinet received an update on the COVID-19 infections across the country and commended South Africans for their continued adherence

CABINET DECISIONS

Green Paper on Marriages

- Cabinet approved the publication of the *Green Paper on Marriages* for public consultation. The *Green Paper* seeks to work towards the development of a new Single Marriage Bill. It also aligns the marriage regime with the constitutional principle of equality.
- The paper makes proposals on unions of people from all sexual orientations, religious and cultural persuasions. It also proposes the complete removal of child marriages in our future marriage regime.

Tourism Sector Recovery Plan

- Cabinet approved the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan. The plan represents the collective response by

government and the tourism sector to the devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The draft plan was released for public consultation in August 2020.

- The plan proposes seven strategic interventions, which include stimulating domestic demand; launching investment and resource mobilisation programmes; and regional tourism integration.
- The proposed interventions are also aligned to the country's ERRP. The objective of this plan is to preserve jobs and livelihoods, and create new job opportunities. The plan will also strengthen transformational interventions in the sector and drive the empowerment of women, youth and people with disabilities in the sector.

- Tourism Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane launched this Tourism Sector Recovery Plan together with the tourism industry on Thursday, 22 April 2021.

Report on the Performance of the Research and Development (R&D) Tax Incentive Programme

- Cabinet approved the submission of the Report on the Performance of R&D Tax Incentive Programme for 2018/19 to Parliament as required by Section 11 D of the Income Tax Act, 1962 (Act 58 of 1962).
- The tax incentive programme was introduced to help the country achieve about 1% of gross domestic product target on R&D expenditure by 2024. The report will be

available to the public once it has gone through the parliamentary process.

No-Fault Compensation Fund Scheme

- Cabinet approved the establishment of the No-Fault Compensation Fund. The fund's establishment is in line with the contractual agreements entered into with the pharmaceutical companies that will be supplying South Africa with COVID-19 vaccines.
- The fund is also important for the protection of South Africans who may be affected by side effects of vaccines to access better support and treatment.
- The fund will be established through the amendments to Section 27 of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act

57 of 2002). It will be chaired by a judge.

Report of the High-Level Panel (HLP) on Wildlife Management

- Cabinet approved the report of the HLP on Wildlife Management, which was established by the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to review policies, legislation and practices on matters related to the management, breeding, hunting, trade and handling (welfare and well-being) of the country's endangered wildlife species. These include elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros.
- The Ministry is expected to release the recommendations of the panel for implementation and necessary consultation.

BILL

Criminal Procedure Amendment Bill

- Cabinet approved the submission of the Criminal Procedure Amendment Bill to Parliament. The Bill amends Section 154(3) of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977), which a Constitutional Court judgment found to be failing to protect the identity of child victims of crime in criminal proceedings.
- The current clause protects the identity of child offenders, victims and witnesses against the harmful effect of the publication of their involvement in criminal proceedings up to the age of 18 years.
- The proposed amendments prohibit the publication of any information, which reveals or may reveal the identity of an accused or a witness who is or was under the age of 18 years at the time of the alleged offence. Publication may only be done after it has been authorised by the judicial officer or presiding judge.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Freedom Month and Freedom Day

- This year's Freedom Month is being celebrated under the theme: 'The Year of Charlotte Maxeke: The Year of Our Freedom under COVID-19'.
- Cabinet calls on everyone to

use the Freedom Month and Freedom Day celebrations to continue to fight the virus while striving for greater inclusion and social cohesion.

- We all have the responsibility to use our democracy and freedom to work together

and unite around a common agenda to build a united and prosperous South Africa.

- This year's celebration will adopt a hybrid model with the national celebration to be hosted in the Free State.

World Book Day

- World Book Day, also known as the International Day of the Book, is marked annually on 23 April. The day is used to encourage the people to embrace books and help establish a better reading culture.
- Cabinet calls on South Africans to support the culture of reading and incorporate it into their daily lifestyles.
- Reading is a foundational skill on which all other learning is built and it creates the opportunity for access to career opportunities.

MESSAGES

Condolences

Cabinet expressed condolences to the family and friends of:

- Dr Sindiso van Zyl** (45), the much-loved medical doctor and Kaya FM host who touched the lives of countless people and contributed immensely to the health and well-being of the nation.
- Vukosi Ringani, Nhlaluko Maluleke, Freedom Rihlamfu, Aubrey Chauke, Themba Nyambi and Tommy Masipenda**, the six pupils from the Jim Chavani Secondary School in Vhembe district, Limpopo who died when a bakkie they were travelling in crashed into a house.

- His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh** (100) in the UK.
- Mr Bhekizwe Vusumuzi Mpila** (43), who was the son-in-law of Deputy President David Mabuza.
- President Idriss Déby Itno** (69) of the Republic of Chad. Cabinet condemned the violence that has claimed so many lives, including that of President Déby, who succumbed to injuries he sustained while leading his military forces against a rebel attack.

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