



Cabinet Meeting of Wednesday, 9 June 2021

ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT



Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) vaccine roll-out

- Cabinet welcomed the progress with COVID-19 vaccinations which had on Tuesday, 8 June 2021 reached 1, 524, 589 and the Pfizer First Dose vaccinations breached the one-million mark with 1, 045, 245, which is a remarkable milestone. In addition, over three million people registered on the Electronic Vaccination Data System, which is a cause for celebration in our concerted fight against the spread of the virus.
- The partnership with the private sector on vaccination and the overall COVID-19 programme strengthen our nation's efforts in ensuring the lifesaving vaccines and the message on safety measures against COVID-19 pandemic reach more people.

- sanitiser; and
- avoiding public places and mass gatherings.

Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS)

- Cabinet noted the results of the QLFS for the first quarter of 2021 that show that the number of employed persons remained almost unchanged at 15,0 million, with a slight decrease of 28 000 in the first quarter of 2021. The number of unemployed persons also remained almost unchanged at 7,2 million compared to the fourth quarter of 2020 (increased by 8 000).
- The number of discouraged work-seekers increased by 201 000 (6,9%) between the two quarters, with a net increase of 164 000 in the not economically active population.
- These minor changes resulted in the official unemployment rate increasing by 0,1 of a percentage point from 32,5% in the fourth quarter of 2020 to 32,6% in the first quarter of 2021 – the highest since the start of the QLFS in 2008.
- The unemployment rate according to the expanded definition of unemployment increased by 0,6 of a percentage point to 43,2% in Quarter 1 of 2021 compared to Quarter 4 of 2020.
- The official unemployment rate among youth (15-34 years) was 46,3% in Quarter 1 of 2021. The rate was 9,3% among university graduates.
- Formal sector employment increased by 79 000 while the other sectors experienced declines in employment in Quarter 1 of 2021.
- Informal sector employment decreased by 19 000 (0,8%), Private households by 70 000 (5,8%) and employment in Agriculture decreased by 18 000 (2,2%).

- Some industries created jobs while others lost jobs between Quarter 4 of 2020 and Quarter 1 of 2021, resulting in a net decline of 28 000 in total employment. Employment mainly increased in Finance (up by 215 000) and other industries that had job gains include Community and Social Services (16 000), Utilities (16 000), Mining (12 000) and Manufacturing (7 000)
- Job losses were observed in Construction (87 000), Trade (84 000), Private households (70 000), Transport (40 000) and Agriculture (18 000).

Gross domestic product (GDP) results

- The South African economy grew by 1,1% in the first quarter of 2021 (January-March), translating into an annualised growth rate of 4,6%. This follows a revised 1,4% (annualised: 5,8%) rise in real GDP in the fourth quarter of 2020.
- The finance, mining and trade industries were the main drivers of output on the production (supply) side of the economy, while household spending and changes in inventories helped spur growth on the expenditure (demand) side.
- Despite this being the third consecutive quarter of positive growth, the South African economy is 2,7% smaller than it was in the first quarter of 2020.

Energy security

- Cabinet acknowledged the frustration of South Africans with the continuing power outages due to failures in the Eskom infrastructure electricity networks.
- The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy has also opened Bid Window 5 of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme to procure 2 600 megawatts of wind and solar power to

- support the national grid.
- The electricity regulation reforms have also enabled municipalities with the capacity to purchase their own power from other alternative power producers. This will alleviate pressure from the Eskom power grid.

Protests

- Cabinet condemned the recent violent protests in Soweto that resulted in the shutdown of the community and appeals to protesters to exercise calm and restraint.

Although the right to peaceful protest is a vital part of a democratic society, it should be exercised within the confines of the law and not infringe on the rights of others.

- Government is committed to working with communities across the country to improve their living conditions.

Crime prevention

- Cabinet commends the work of the multidisciplinary team which seized 800kg of compressed pure cocaine with an estimated street value of R400 million.
- Cabinet expressed concern at the increase in reported cases of vehicle spiking on the country's highways and secluded roads, which have resulted in the robbery and killing of some of the motorists. It called on law-enforcement agencies to intensify their efforts to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to book.

Cabinet called on members of the community to report crime, including drug-related activities, to the police and not to take the law into their own hands or resort to mob justice.

Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC)

- His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa, in his capacity as the Coordinator of the CAHOSCC, participated in its virtual meeting on Tuesday, 8 June 2021.

- The meeting adopted the CAHOSCC Coordinators Report on its importance for Africa in preparation for the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change, the developments on the work of the African Climate Change programmes and the African Green Stimulus Programme.
- The summit reaffirmed that the international community needs to significantly scale up its efforts, raise the level of ambition and support developing countries with the means to implement climate actions in view of our differentiated responsibilities.
- All African countries require support from international partners and our development space should be respected to achieve our climate goals and ambitions, while contributing our fair share to the global effort.
- The meeting affirmed the need for the recognition of our different national circumstances and capacities as it is not realistic to expect Africa to meet the same timelines as developed countries to transition our economies and to disinvest from fossil fuels.
- This is important, especially given the high levels of inequality, unemployment and developmental needs across our continent, particularly among women and the youth.
- Furthermore, we need to send a clear signal that implementation and ambition apply equally to mitigation, adaptation and support.

UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Resolution on Palestinian Territories

- Cabinet welcomed the adoption of the UNHRC Resolution on ensuring respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem and in Israel.
- The resolution further called for the urgent establishment of an independent international commission of inquiry to investigate all alleged violations of human rights. Cabinet emphasised the importance of a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the existence of two states.

Cabinet also welcomes the validation of the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use by the World Health Organisation, which enables the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority to expeditiously consider the application from Sinovac.

- Cabinet is reminding all South Africans to remain vigilant and adhere to the restrictions under Alert Level 2 of the national lockdown. The third wave is imminent and we have the power to flatten the curve. Let us take the responsibility of:
 - wearing masks in public;
 - adhering to social distancing of at least 1,5 metres;
 - always washing hands with soap and water or using a 70% alcohol-based hand

Cabinet remains committed to the implementation of the Integrated Resource Plan 2030, which is based on a diversified energy mix that will reduce reliance on a single or a few primary energy sources.

CABINET DECISIONS

Extension of the National State of Disaster

- Cabinet approved the extension of the National State of Disaster on COVID-19 until 15 July 2021, in terms of Section 27(5)(c) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002).
- The extension enables the country to continue with non-pharmaceutical interventions against COVID-19.

Progress reports on the implementation of the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF)

- Cabinet approved the performance reports on the implementation of the MTSF 2019-2024 that have been compiled by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the implementation of the MTSF. A number of targets within the priority areas remained on course for the period under review whilst there is a notable delay on some of the performance targets, some due to budget reprioritisation.
- The performance reports will be released to the public and cluster Ministers will hold separate media briefings to unpack reports both on the successes and interventions underway to improve the performance.

Framework Document on South Africa's National Interests

- Cabinet approved the Framework Document on South Africa's National

Interests in its engagement with both domestic and international issues. The framework document draws from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 and the National Development Plan.

- The document outlines amongst others the country's position on its national sovereignty and constitutional order; safety and well-being of its citizens; its economic prosperity and country's approach in building a better Africa and a better world.
- The document will be made available to the public through the government website (www.gov.za) and that of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (www.dirco.gov.za).

UPCOMING EVENT



G7 Leaders' Summit

- Cabinet is confident that South Africa's participation at the G7 Leaders' Summit in the United Kingdom from 11 to 13 June 2021, led by President Ramaphosa, is an opportunity to champion a number of pressing issues for our country and the continent.
- Gatherings such as the G7 Leaders' Summit are important opportunities for South Africa to promote its view of a fairer and more peaceful world. South Africa will highlight the socio-economic devastation wrought by the pandemic, and will also profile how we are

- emerging from this devastation due to our prudent fiscal and social policies.
- South Africa will also use the G7 Leaders' Summit to further lobby for a temporary waiver of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights at the World Trade Organisation to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.
- This will enable countries to manufacture their own vaccines and pave the way for the development of a local pharmaceutical manufacturing industry in our country and on the continent.

MESSAGES

Congratulations

Cabinet extended its congratulations to:

- Mr Pitso Mosimane (Coach Pitso)**, for flying the South African flag high by leading the continent's top football club, Al Ahly, to victory in the African Super Cup. The former Mamelodi Sundowns manager earned

his fourth title with Al Ahly since joining the soccer club based in Cairo, Egypt just six months ago.

Condolences

Cabinet expressed condolences to the family and friends of:

- Mr MacDonald Nodana Mathunjwa**, the actor best known for his roles in *Home*

Affairs, Generations, Soul City, Intsika and Bones of Bones.

- Mr Mabi Gabriel Thobejane**, who was one of the country's most acclaimed jazz musicians.
- Mr Ben Kruger**, the veteran actor, writer and producer best known for his role in *Binnelanders*.

- Ms Shaleen Surtie-Richards**, the accomplished actress best known for her role in the 1988 film *Fie! se Kind*, and for roles in *Egoli: Place of Gold* and *7de Laan*.
- Ms Ivy Cikizwa Gcina**, who served on many structures during her time fighting the apartheid regime, including serving in the then Port

Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation and as a member of the first democratic Parliament (1994 – 1999).

Enquiries:
Ms Phumla Williams
 Cabinet Spokesperson
Mobile: 083 501 0139
www.gcis.gov.za | www.gov.za



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