

# Cabinet Statement

## Virtual Cabinet Meeting of Wednesday, 24 February 2021

### ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT



#### ■ Class of 2020

- Cabinet congratulated the Class of 2020 who persevered against all odds and obtained a sterling set of matric results. The 2020 exams which saw an increase in the number of learners who wrote their final examinations when compared to 2019, also saw an increase in the number of learners who attained a Bachelor's admission pass.
- Cabinet wishes all the learners well as they embark on their respective post-schooling years. In addition to university studies, learners are encouraged to also explore vocational skills training that is available through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges as part of strengthening South Africa's technical skills base that is essential for our economy. Learners who do not qualify for the TVET colleges or universities are encouraged to explore the Second-Chance Matric Programme.
- Cabinet also congratulated all officials and the management of the Department of Basic Education who – in addition to implementing health and safety measures at schools in 2020 to protect teachers and learners from the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic – worked tirelessly to achieve the impressive matric results.

**Cabinet wishes to express its appreciation to all the teachers, school managers, officials within the basic education systems, teacher unions, learner organisations, the learners and their parents for their hard work and collective dedication to ensure that we achieve the kind of results we can be proud of despite the difficulties experienced in 2020.**

- Cabinet is pleased that the 2021 school year has officially started and is confident that the measures in place are sufficient for safe teaching and learning. Everyone has a responsibility to remain vigilant and to strictly adhere to health and safety protocols, which are designed to safeguard the health and safety of teachers, staff and learners. Cabinet calls on all South Africans to support our learners and to ensure that they succeed.

#### ■ State of the Nation Address (SoNA)

- Cabinet welcomed the 2021 SoNA that was delivered by His Excellency, President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, to a hybrid Joint Sitting of the two houses of Parliament – the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces – in Cape Town on Thursday, 11 February 2021.
- The SoNA and the President's Response to the SoNA Debate offered a progress report on the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) and roadmap to the impactful implementation of government's plans. Cabinet is resolute to fully implement all the commitments announced by the President.
- While acknowledging the socio-economic challenges confronting us, Cabinet remains confident that they will be addressed through the implementation of the ERRP and government's Programme of Action (PoA), with a focus on achieving an inclusive growth and the goals of our Vision 2030 as set out in the National Development Plan (NDP).
- In spite of the setback caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that started in 2020, the overall PoA remains on track though somewhat slowed down. On Wednesday, 24 February 2021, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni outlined the budget to fund this year's plans.

#### ■ NDP Review Report

- Cabinet noted the report on the outcomes of the review of the NDP and will endeavour to restore progress on government's contribution towards Vision 2030. The National Planning Commission will release the NDP Review Report.

#### ■ Local vaccines development

- Cabinet welcomed the efforts and progress made by our scientists, researchers and medical experts towards a national initiative of developing our own vaccines to deal with current and future pandemics. Our scientists, researchers and medical experts have been at the forefront of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and have led the genomic surveillance of COVID-19 virus, which resulted in the discovery of the 501Yv2 variant. In this regard, Cabinet would like to congratulate all the South African scientists and researchers who

managed to recreate the virus in the laboratory for purposes of enhancing research on the treatment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Cabinet believes that our national science and innovation system is a valuable resource that should be nurtured and developed.

- Even beyond the research on COVID-19, South Africa's world-renowned scientists and innovators have delivered cutting-edge technology such as the world's first digital laser and the Luxol full body x-ray scanner.

#### ■ COVID-19 vaccine roll-out

- Cabinet appreciated the commencement of the national roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, with the first doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine being administered to healthcare workers (HCWs) in both the public and private sectors.
- Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, our HCWs have been the shield that kept our nation safe. They have faced the virus head-on and have persevered against an unrelenting virus. Their selfless sacrifice has saved countless lives and our nation owes them an immense debt of gratitude.
- Their vaccination will help protect them against infection and ultimately return our nation to normalcy. Cabinet is pleased that millions of additional vaccines procured from several sources will arrive at varying intervals in the coming months, beginning in March 2021.
- Once HCWs have been vaccinated as part of Phase 1 of the vaccination roll-out strategy, Phase 2 will focus on essential workers and vulnerable groups, which include people over the age of 60 years, people with comorbidities as well as those living in places such as nursing homes and hostels.



**Citizens are reminded that vaccination is free and voluntary, and remains our best defence against the virus, coupled with the continued adherence to the health protocols of avoiding large gatherings, wearing a mask in public, sanitising hands with water and soap or a 70% alcohol-based hand sanitiser and maintaining a social distance of at least 2.5 metres. These measures are critical to the health of our nation.**

#### ■ 4th Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS)

- The 4th QLFS released by Statistics South Africa on Tuesday, 23 February 2021 continues to remind us of the challenges of unemployment facing the country. Cabinet is however encouraged by the green shoots that our economy continues to demonstrate amongst the current harsh economic realities.
- According to the recent statistics employment increased by 333 000 jobs, with the formal sector contributing the largest (189 000 jobs) between Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 in 2020. Furthermore, there has been a decline in the number of the Not Economically Active by 890 000 in Quarter 4 in 2020 compared to Quarter 3 in 2020.
- Cabinet remains concerned that the rate at which the economy creates jobs remains slower than the rate the country sheds jobs by 701 000 between Quarter 3 and Quarter 4. Although Quarter 4 noted an increase in the unemployment rate, the percentage increase of 1,7% is still lower than the Quarter 3 increase of 9% to the unemployment rate.
- It is disturbing that young people constitute the largest pool of the unemployed. African and coloured South Africans as well as women remain the most vulnerable groups in the economy of the country, and this strengthens government's resolve to fast-track measures to support and enable the meaningful participation of youth, women and black people in the economy of the country. This is in line with the recommitment to economic reform and transformation made by the President in the 2021 SoNA.

#### ■ 2021 National Budget

- The tabling of the 2021 National Budget is an important part of South Africa's open and accountable system of

democracy. Following President Ramaphosa's SoNA, the 2021 National Budget outlines government's financial plan to support the implementation of the national PoA as outlined in the 2021 SoNA.

**Cabinet welcomes the 2021 National Budget as the best available option in balancing fiscal sustainability whilst funding critical government priorities such as the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines, supporting the most vulnerable in our society through a comprehensive social assistance programme and the ERRP in order to rebuild the economy, support job creation and attract investment, albeit under a challenging economic environment.**

#### ■ Copper cable theft

- Cabinet welcomed the recent sentencing by the Western Cape High Court of five members of a syndicate found guilty of copper cable theft to a cumulative 1 250 years' imprisonment. We congratulate our law-enforcement agencies for the arrest and successful prosecution of those who are involved in copper cable theft.

**Cabinet is hopeful that the recent arrests and sentences sent a strong message that those responsible for such economic sabotage and crimes will face the full might of the law. We call on the public to report criminals to law-enforcement agencies.**

#### ■ Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF)

- Cabinet welcomed the arrest of the man who brutally attacked Ms Dimakatso Ratselane, the journalist of Lesedi FM.
- Cabinet also welcomed the sentencing of the murderer of the pregnant Tshogofatso Pule and the arrest of Nthuthuko Shoba, her boyfriend and father of her unborn child, for allegedly masterminding her murder.

**Cabinet calls on the criminal justice system to ensure justice is served on behalf of Ms Ratselane, the late Ms Pule and other victims of GBVF. Ending violence against women and children requires all of us to take a stand to stop this scourge.**

#### ■ Southern African Development Community (SADC) Media Awards

- Cabinet called on the South African media to submit their entries for the 2021 SADC Media Awards competition. Interested journalists can access more information about the competition from [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int) and [www.gcis.gov.za](http://www.gcis.gov.za).
- The awards promote regional integration and cooperation by encouraging media practitioners in SADC member states to cover issues pertaining to the region.

### CABINET DECISIONS

#### ■ National State of Disaster

- Cabinet approved the decision to declare a National State of Disaster following the destruction caused by tropical storm Eloise and summer seasonal rains which left infrastructure and homes damaged in various provinces. This is done in terms of Section 27(1) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002).
- The declaration will assist government to enhance existing measures undertaken by various organs of state to mitigate the impact of the national disaster.

#### ■ Presidential Remuneration Review Commission (PRRC) Report

- Cabinet received and approved the PRRC Report. The PRRC was appointed to investigate the remuneration and conditions of service in the Public Service and the national and provincial public entities listed in Part A and C, Schedule 3 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999).
- The priority sectors covered in the report are educators, health, security sector and public entities (Schedule 3A

and 3B of PFMA of 1999. The report will be made available through the Department of Public Service and Administration website ([www.dpsa.gov.za](http://www.dpsa.gov.za)).

#### ■ South Africa's Country Report to the United Nations (UN) on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

- Cabinet approved the submission of South Africa's ninth to 11th periodic country report on the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). South Africa signed the ICERD in 1994 and ratified it on 10 December 1998.
- The report outlines progress made by South Africa in putting in place legislative, judicial and administrative measures to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.
- This periodic report focuses on the progress made in advancing equality, fighting xenophobia and other related intolerance, prevention of hate crimes, and highlights challenges that still remain. After its presentation to the relevant body, the report will be made public.

#### ■ Accession to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid

- Cabinet approved the tabling of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid to Parliament for accession. This is done in terms of Section 231(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. The convention, among others, declares apartheid as a crime against humanity and that it posed a serious threat to international peace and security.
- Once approved by both houses of Parliament, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation will deposit the instrument of accession with the UN.

#### ■ Amendment of the agreement between South Africa and the Netherlands on social security

- Cabinet approved the amendment of the agreement between the government of South Africa and the government of the Kingdom of Netherlands on social security cooperation.



- The cooperation agreement on social security was signed in The Hague in May 2001. The agreement facilitates the export of social security benefits for the respective citizens. The Netherlands Social Security Policy has made amendments to its export social security in respect to the Dutch children. The proposed amendment is to align the agreement to these changes.

#### ■ Ratification of the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19)

- Cabinet approved submission of the WRC-19 Final Acts to Parliament for ratification, in line with Section 231(2) of the Constitution. The WRC-19 is the outcome of the UN's International Telecommunication Union (ITU) conference that are convened annually to, amongst others, review and revise the radio regulations.

South Africa is a signatory to the ITU. Once Parliament ratifies the WRC-19 Final Act, South Africa will amend the National Radio Frequency Plan accordingly.

#### ■ Revised White Paper on National Transport Policy

- Cabinet approved the revised White Paper on National Transport Policy. It replaces the 1996 National Transport Policy. The revised policy addresses the changes that have emerged over the years in the road, rail, maritime and aviation spaces. It broadly aligns the country to the international, regional and continental transportation trends.
- The policy has gone through wide consultations with all the relevant stakeholders. Once gazetted, the document can be accessed through the Department of Transport website ([www.transport.gov.za](http://www.transport.gov.za)).

### BILLS

#### ■ Land Court Bill

- Cabinet approved the submission of the Land Court Bill to Parliament for processing. The Bill establishes a specialist Land Court, with its judgments, orders and decisions appealable at the proposed specialist Land Court of Appeal.
- The Bill will resolve the challenges that were experienced under the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act 22 of 1994) such as backlogs in land claims and dispute resolution mechanisms when disputes arise. It will also contribute immensely in the implementation of the Land Reform Programme.

#### ■ Gas Amendment Bill of 2020

- Cabinet approved the submission of the Gas Amendment Bill of 2020 to Parliament. The proposed Bill seeks to align the gas industry to, amongst others, new transportation technologies of natural and unconventional gases that were not catered for in the current Gas Act, 2001 (Act 48 of 2001). The amendments, which have been fully consulted with all the relevant stakeholders, will contribute to the ongoing investment in infrastructure to ensure diversity of the country's energy mix.
- The Bill will undergo further

parliamentary consultation processes to ensure it is widely endorsed for implementation once passed into law.

#### ■ The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Amendment Bill of 2021

- Cabinet approved the publication for public comment of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Amendment Bill of 2021. The proposed amendments seek to address the weaknesses that are in the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair

Discrimination Act, 2000 (Act 4 of 2000). The proposed amendments will strengthen its ability to prevent discrimination and promote equality for all South Africans, as enshrined in Section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.

- The Bill will be gazetted and made available through the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development's website ([www.justice.gov.za](http://www.justice.gov.za)).

#### ■ South African Postbank Amendment Bill of 2020

- Cabinet approved the publication of the South African

Postbank Amendment Bill of 2020 for public comment. The Bill amends the current South African Postbank Limited Act, 2010 (Act 9 of 2010).

- The Bill provides for the establishment of the South African Postbank Holding Company in terms of the Banks Act, 1990 (Act 94 of 1990). The company will provide for the inclusion of financially excluded members of the public to participate meaningfully in the economic activities. It will also provide a facility for some of government's financial services.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### ■ International Women's Day

- Cabinet will join the world in celebrating International Women's Day on 8 March 2021. This day is used to reflect on progress made in achieving gender equality and also coincides with the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.
- Since 1994, we have made strides in implementing policies and programmes aimed at advancing women's rights and we remain committed to ensuring women are economically empowered.

- In recognition of Struggle stalwart Mama Charlotte Maxeke's individual and collective contributions to freedom and democracy in South Africa, government declared 2021 the Year of Charlotte Maxeke, to mark the 150th anniversary of her birth. She was a social and political activist with extraordinary courage and intellect.

#### ■ India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum Ministerial Meeting

- South Africa – led by Minister in The Presidency for

Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane – will participate in the IBSA Women's Forum Ministerial Meeting on 16 March 2021. The event is an important one for South Africa because when he was still Chair of the African Union in 2020, President Ramaphosa had prioritised women empowerment, entrepreneurship and the fight against GBVF.

- The forum, which was established in 2007, will provide a platform for South Africa to advance its policies and key issues that impact on

women.

- The upcoming event will take place within the context of countries' recovery plans related to COVID-19. It is generally acknowledged that women bore the heaviest burden of the devastating effects of the pandemic.

#### ■ Human Rights Month

- President Ramaphosa will deliver the virtual keynote address at the 2021 National Human Rights Day commemorations on 21 March 2021 under the theme: "The Year of Charlotte Maxeke: Promoting and Protecting

human rights in the age of COVID-19."

- This year's commemoration of Human Rights Month coincides with the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, and it provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the bravery of men and women who protested on 21 March 1960 for the total abolition of the pass laws.
- Cabinet calls on South Africans to use the day to remember and honour those who fought in the struggle for our freedom and democracy.

### MESSAGES

#### ■ Congratulations

Cabinet extends its congratulations and well-wishes to:

- South African filmmakers of the film, Address Unknown**, for making it to the Official Selection of the 2021 Pan African Film Festival, which is America's largest and most prestigious black film festival. The short film, which is dedicated to the people of District Six, was funded by among others, the National Film and Video Foundation, an agency of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.
- Nigerian-born Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who was elected on consensus on 15 February 2021 as the seventh Director-General (DG) of the

World Trade Organisation, with effect from 1 March 2021. She is the first woman and the first African to serve as DG of the international organisation that deals with the global rules of trade between nations.

#### ■ Condolences

Cabinet sent condolences to the family and friends of:

- Thovhele Ranwedzi Gilbert Tshikalange** (87) of the Mphaphuli dynasty in Limpopo, a stalwart of the liberation struggle and a fierce opponent against the implementation of Black Administration Act of 1927. He led the Tax Levy Boycott from 1964 – 1969. He was banished and deported to Kuruman in

the Northern Cape from 1969 to 1974. Upon his return to his territorial area, he was further imposed with a banning order and placed under house arrest in the township of Makwarela in the Sibasa Magisterial District from 1974 to 1976. In 1987, together with other veterans of the Struggle and progressive traditional leaders, they founded the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa and he was elected its National Organiser.

- Three ArcelorMittal workers – **Mr Lesenyehlo Mofokeng** (31), **Mr Thami Sampo Molefe** (52) and **Mr Mpho Meshack Madumisa** (29),

who died tragically when the building in Vanderbijlpark where they were working collapsed following an explosion on Wednesday, 17 February 2021. The Department of Employment and Labour's Inspection and Enforcement Services have launched an investigation into the incident. Cabinet urges all companies to prioritise employee safety and to constantly test their systems to ensure that workers are not placed at risk.

#### ■ Ambassador Themba Muziwake Nicholas Kubheka

- (72), who passed away in January in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. Ambassador Kubheka served as South Africa's Ambassa-

dor to the People's Republic of China, Denmark and the Republic of Angola. He also worked as an Intergovernmental Relations and Cooperative Government specialist in the Office of the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces in Parliament. He went into exile in the 1970s and was trained in Angola in 1977 as a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe, known by his nom de guerre of Aaron Minisi.

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