ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT

South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) Western Cape taxi strike

Cabinet condemned the ongoing impasse between SANTACO and the City of Cape Town, which has escalated to a violent strike as a result of the impounding of two vehicles by the City of Cape Town.

Cabinet condemned the violence and anarchy in Cape Town and has called on SANTACO to ensure that its protest action is peaceful and does not interfere with the rights of others. In this regard, we have noted that there have been no violent incidents in the Western Cape. Members of the South African Police Service and other law enforcement agencies have been directed to ensure the violent situation is under control and to support residents' normal movement to school, work, and their normal daily activities.

Cabinet was also briefed about the City of Cape Town's imposing of taxi operating conditions with both the National Roads Traffic Act, 1996 (Act 93 of 1996) and the National Land Transport Act, 2009 (Act 3 of 2009), which regulates the traffic offences and applicable penalties, including the impounding of a vehicle.

Cabinet has directed the Minister of Transport, Mr Sindiswa Chikunga, to ensure that any two operating conditions that contravene the laws of the Republic are removed.

Fight against illegal mining

Cabinet welcomed the deployment of a special police unit, which is supported by the military, in KwaZulu-Natal, to deal with illegal mining activities.

In addition, Cabinet noted the arrest of over 164 suspects regarding mining activities and directed law-enforcement agencies to urgently clamp down on this and other serious crimes in the country.

The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy has committed to closed all derelict open shafts and mines holes in KwaZulu-Natal by the end of September 2023 whilst finalising plans to close other derelict open shafts and mining holes across the country.

The security situation in Niger

Cabinet has noted the impact the security situation in Niger is having on air travel between South Africa-South Africa and Western Europe, with negative implications for business and individuals alike and the airline industry that just started to recover from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 disease (2019 COVID-19) pandemic.

Cabinet reiterates government's condemnation of the coup attempt and calls for the speedy reinstatement of a democratic order, and also reiterates to reintroduce to normal during the democratic Community of West African States.

Russia-South Africa Summit

President Cyril Ramaphosa was amongst other African leaders who attended the Second Russo-Africa Summit, in St Petersburg in the Russian Federation on 27 and 28 July 2023. This summit adopted the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum Action Plan which focuses on strengthening cooperation in areas of politics and security, economy, human rights, co-operation, and interests of mutual benefit and prosperity.

On the sidelines of the summit, African Heads of State and Government who are part of the African Peace Initiative on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine held follow-up talks with President Vladimir Putin on the previously discussed confidence-building measures that will create conditions for a negotiated settlement to end the war.

President Ramaphosa and Putin also held a bilateral meeting and discussed opportunities to increase trade between the two countries, and for the Russian Federation to increase investments in South Africa.

BRICS Summit hosting readiness

Cabinet was apprised that it is underway to ensure the security of South Africa is ready to host the 15th BRICS Summit to be held in June 2023.

In addition, the last of the BRICS Ministerial meetings - the BRICS Ministers of Agriculture - is currently underway, while the Ministerial Meetings of Environment, Security, Trade, Industry, Education, Science, Labour, Communications, Health, and Urbanisation Forum have concluded their reports for the Leaders' Summit.

The BRICS Outreach programmes for various sectors and communities have also been concluded.

This engagement provided governments, organisations, experts, and academia from the BRICS nations an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest that will enable informed decision-making during the BRICS Summit.

National Development Plan (NDP) Ten-Year Review

Cabinet welcomed the Ten-Year Review of the NDP by the NDP Planning Commission that pointed out that the economy has recovered in a manner that does not serve the interests of all South Africans, which is a major concern behind increasing levels of poverty and inequality.

Government remained committed to restructuring and transforming the economy to serve the interests of all South Africans.

Energy

The 25th July marked the First Anniversary of President Ramaphosa announced the Energy Action Plan.

Cabinet decided to press on with the execution phase of the Energy Action Plan.

Cabinet welcomed the T en-Year Review of the NDP by the NDP Planning Commission that pointed out that the economy has recovered in a manner that does not serve the interests of all South Africans, which is a major concern behind increasing levels of poverty and inequality.

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