

Cabinet Statement

Statement on the Cabinet Meeting
of Tuesday, 8 August 2023



ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT

- **South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) Western Cape taxi strike**
- Cabinet was briefed about the ongoing impasse between SANTACO Western Cape and the City of Cape Town, which has escalated into a violent strike as a result of the impounding of taxi vehicles by the City of Cape Town.

Cabinet condemns 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 were no violent incidents in the last 48-hours. However, members of the South African Police Service and other law-enforcement agencies have been directed to ensure the violent situation is under control to allow residents safe 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 which are at variance with both the National Road Traffic Act, 1996 (Act 93 of 1996) and the National Land Transport Act, 2009 (Act 5 of 2009), which regulate the traffic offences and applicable penalties, including the impounding of vehicles.
- Cabinet has directed the Minister of Transport, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga, to ensure that any taxi operating conditions that contradict 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 Riverlea, Johannesburg, to deal with illegal mining in the area.
- In addition, Cabinet commended the arrest of over 194 suspects over illegal 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 close all derelict open shafts and mine holes in Riverlea 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/Southern Africa and Western Europe, with negative implications for business and individuals alike and the airline industry that is just starting to recover from the devastating ravages of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Cabinet reiterated government's condemnation of the coup in Niger and the call for the speedy restoration of a democratic order, and also noted the initiative to restore normality under the Economic Community of West African States.

- **Russia-Africa Summit**
- President Cyril Ramaphosa was amongst other African leaders who attended the Second Russia-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 secu-



- rity, economics, humanitarian matters, 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.
- Presidents 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 all systems go in terms of South Africa's readiness to host the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg from 22 to 24 August 2023.
- The last of the BRICS Ministerial meetings – the BRICS Ministers of Agriculture Meeting – is currently underway, while the Ministerial Meetings of Foreign Affairs, 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.
- These engagements provided governments, organisations, experts and academics from the BRICS nations an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest that will enable informed decision-making during the BRICS Summit.

- **Energy**
- The 25th July marked the First Anniversary since President Ramaphosa announced

- the Energy Action Plan.
- Cabinet welcomed the progress made to date to implement the Energy Action Plan, which continues to register an improvement in the Energy Availability Factor and improvement in the stages of load-shedding.

■ **Tourism**

Cabinet is pleased that the Tourism statistics for June 2023 show that our tourism sector is slowly but surely recovering from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The June 2023 statistics from Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) show that the volume of arrivals, departures and travellers in transit increased for both South African residents and foreign travellers between June 2022 and June 2023.

- **Economy**
- Cabinet welcomed Stats SA's report of a drop in consumer inflation from 6.3 per cent in May to 5.4 per cent in June 2023, which is the largest decline since May 2020. This drop shows the resilience of our economy, which has been further buoyed by the South Africa Reserve Bank's decision to leave the repo rate unchanged at 8.25 per cent.

- **South African Sign Language (SASL) Bill**
- Cabinet welcomed the recent signing into law of the SASL Bill by President Ramaphosa, which made the SASL the 12th official language in South Africa. This will promote the rights of about 600 000 SASL users in South Africa.

CABINET DECISIONS

- **Pre-release calendar for the publication of the quarterly crime statistics for the 2023/24 financial year**
- Cabinet approved the pre-release calendar for the publication of the quarterly crime statistics for the 2023/24 financial year. The crime statistics will be released in August and November 2023 for quarters one and two, and February and May 2024 for quarter three and quarter four respectively. The frequent release of crime statistics is important for monitoring crime trends and better decision-making in the fight against crime.
- **Financial Inclusion Policy**
- Cabinet approved the Financial Inclusion Policy for implementation. The policy forms part of government's reforms of the financial sector regulations and in line with the Twin Peaks model of National Treasury.
- The policy, amongst others, aims to ensure better market conduct and the treatment of customers in the financial sector. The purpose is to ensure that financial institutions conduct business in ways that are fair to customers, prevent practices that undermine the integrity of financial markets, and build confidence in the financial system.
- The implementation of the policy will ensure that the country strengthens its financial systems to support economic growth and promote access to financial services and financial inclusion for all citizens. It is an acknowledgement that while levels of access have improved in transactional accounts, this has not reflected across many other financial products and services.
- The policy is available on the National Treasury website: www.treasury.gov.za

BILLS

- **National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) Amendment Bill of 2023**
- Cabinet approved the submission of the draft NPA Amendment Bill of 2023 to Parliament. The Bill amends the NPA Act, 1998 (Act 32 of 1998) to provide for the establishment of the Investigating Directorate as a permanent entity within the NPA and to also strengthen its investigative powers.
- **The Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-related Information Amendment Bill**
- Cabinet approved the submission of the draft Amendment Bill to Parliament, which amends the Regulation of Communications and Provision of Communication-related Information Act (RICA), 2002 (Act 70 of 2002).
- The amendments are largely to provide adequate safeguards to protect the right to privacy, as buttressed by the rights of access to courts, freedom of expression of the media and legal privilege in line with the 2021 Constitutional Court judgement that found the RICA of 2002 to be unconstitutional.

CURRENT EVENT

- **Women's Month**
- South Africa is commemorating Women's Month in August under the theme: "Accelerating socio-economic opportunities for empowerment of women" to pay tribute to the more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings in 1956 to protest against the oppressive pass laws of the apartheid government.

Cabinet calls on South Africans to use the month not to only honour women who fought for our freedom but to also play our part to building a society that supports women empowerment and guarantees the safety of women and children.

MESSAGES



- **Congratulations**
- Cabinet extends its congratulations and well-wishes to:
- **Netball Spar Proteas**, for making it to the top six in the Netball World Cup. Cabinet called on all South Africans to use such unifying moments as an opportunity to reach out to fellow South Africans to build social cohesions and promote nation-building in a society where everyone feels welcome
- **Banyana Banyana**, for making history by advancing to the last 16 of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. Their incred-

- ible feats on the sporting field inspired the nation and they have flown the country's flag high.
- **Prof Thuli Madonsela**, the former Public Protector, for being appointed to the United Nations Scientific Advisory Board for Independent Advice on Breakthroughs in Science and Technology.
- **Tatjana Schoenmaker**, for winning gold in the 200m breaststroke and silver in the 100m breaststroke at the World Aquatics Championships in Fukuoka, Japan.

- **Condolences**
- Cabinet expressed condolences to the family and friends of:
- **Imam Achmad Cassiem** (78), the former Robben Island prisoner, Pan Africanist Congress member and founding member of the Qibla Movement, who was a veteran of the Struggle against apartheid.
- **The people who lost their lives** during the minibus taxi strike in Cape Town.

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MOVING TOWARDS 30^{YRS} OF FREEDOM