

Cabinet Statement

Statement on the Cabinet Meeting of
Wednesday, 29 March 2023



ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT

■ Electricity

- The Minister for Electricity, Dr Kgosisentsho Ramokgopa, undertook visits to 14 power stations for first-hand insight of the challenges facing Eskom at a power station level.



The visits allowed the Minister opportunities to engage with management, workers and unions at the coalface, with the aim to forge collaboration at a power station level, as part of the programme to improve generation capacity and ultimately address electricity shortage.

- Cabinet joins the Minister in recognising that Eskom employees are key to solving our energy challenges.

■ Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) on jobs numbers

- Cabinet welcomed the upward trajectory in employment situation in the country as the QLFS reported a 48 000 increase in the number of jobs in the formal non-agricultural sector during the fourth quarter of 2022. The jobs growth was driven by trade, business services and mining sector, bringing the level of employment in the country to almost 10 million.

- The steady increase in the number of jobs is a result of concerted efforts by all players, in partnership with government, in the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP).

The fourth quarter jobs figures build on the solid employment gains of 648 000 jobs in the second quarter of 2022 and 204 000 jobs created between the second and third quarter of 2022.

- The focused implementation of the ERRP is resulting in strong inroads into employment creation and the fight against unemployment and poverty.

■ Proudly South African Buy Local Summit and Expo

- Cabinet applauded the successful hosting of the 11th Proudly South African Buy Local Summit and Expo held in Johannesburg under the theme: "Growing the economy

and creating jobs through Localisation" and which was addressed by the Deputy President, Mr Paul Mashatile, on 28 March 2023.

- The Expo showcased over 200 high-quality of home-grown goods and services from toys, educational material, furniture, foods and drink products to electronics, demonstrating the great potential in South Africa for innovation, adaptation in manufacturing and the capability of local manufacturers.

Cabinet encouraged both business and citizens to buy local as every purchase or demand for local products and services contribute in the revival of the economy and support job creation.

■ South Africa - Belgium relations

- Cabinet welcomed the confidence displayed in South Africa through the historic State Visit of His Majesty King Philippe and Her Majesty Queen Mathilde, of The Kingdom of Belgium, at the invitation of President Cyril Ramaphosa, from 22 to 27 March 2023.
- Strong bilateral relations with a focus on trade, foreign direct investment and tourism underscored this inaugural State Visit. Further, the South Africa-Belgium Business Forum provided a platform for exchanges and sectoral conversations to improve trade and investment relationships, which holds the potential to promote South African industrialisation.
- Belgium is one of South Africa's most important economic and export partners. In 2020 South Africa exported \$2.38 billion to Belgium in sectors such as diamonds, delivery trucks, organic chemicals and

precious metal scraps. There are also significant investment opportunities between our two countries in energy, infrastructure and healthcare.

■ National Conference on the Constitution

- Cabinet welcomed the discussion on the Constitution held at the three-day National Conference (22-24 March 2023) under the theme: "Reflections on the Constitution: Rule of law, accountability, social and economic justice". The deliberations reflected on the past 25 years of the Constitution and chartered what needs to be done.
- The Constitution remains a living and imperative document in government's pursuit of transforming the lives of all South Africans for the better.

■ National Sexual and Reproductive Justice Conference

- Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights was the focus at the conference held from 22 to 24 March, led by the Minister of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu. Government is committed to ensuring that all people have the power and resources to make healthy decisions about their bodies, sexuality and reproduction.
- The second report of the High-Level Commission on the Nairobi Summit on the International Conference on Population and Development titled 'Sexual and Reproductive Justice as the vehicle to deliver the Nairobi Summit Commitments' was also launched. This provides guidance on achieving sexual and reproductive justice for all in South Africa.

■ Floods and severe weather

- President Cyril Ramaphosa

visited Port St. Johns in the Eastern Cape on 28 March 2023 to assess the response of government and civil society to the situation following extensive damage caused by recent flooding in the area.

- The President reassured communities of government's support and applauded the work of emergency services who assisted in rescue efforts, after the flooding in Port St. Johns and surrounding areas, which caused landslides, uprooted trees, blocked roads and severely affecting the lives of people.

The National Disaster Management Centre is coordinating government's response working with the Eastern Cape and the OR Tambo district disaster management centres to limit the negative impact of the floods on our communities. Cabinet noted the use of science in the response and mitigation efforts through work being undertaken by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, together with the South African National Space Agency, the South African Environmental Observation Network and the South African Weather Service.

- With deepening impact of climate change, the role of science, technology and innovation in disaster mitigation, response and in some instances, prevention, has become more critical.
- Cabinet reminded people who live in low-lying and flood-prone areas to always exercise extreme caution and follow weather warnings.

■ Public sector wage negotiations

- Cabinet was briefed about the ongoing public sector wage negotiations and welcomed early indications of the possibility of reaching agreement with trade unions representing majority of public servants.

■ Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster's Response to the 20th March Protest Action

- Cabinet applauded the efforts of the JCPS Cluster and the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure to ensure that the 20th of March

2023 protest action passed without major incidents.

- Whilst acknowledging that operations of that nature cannot be mounted on a daily basis, Cabinet has directed that the JCPS Cluster develops and table an integrated and intelligence-led Crime Prevention Plan to urgently and effectively deal with organised crime, safety and security of people in South Africa.

- Cabinet expressed its appreciation of the solidarity shown by the majority of South Africans in rejecting the calls for a shutdown and protecting our constitutional democracy.

■ Investigations on the 'Facebook Rapist' Thabo Bester matter

- Cabinet was briefed on progress on efforts to arrest fugitive Thabo Bester, the 'Facebook Rapist' who escaped from the G4S-operated correctional facility.
- Cabinet directed the Department of Correctional Services to speedily finalise the processes to take over the operations of the two private-companies-managed correctional facilities and ensure consequence management for everyone involved.

■ Messrs Cloete and Thomas Murray assassination

- Cabinet condemned the assassination of Mr Cloete Murray and his son Thomas, the insolvency practitioners who were involved with some high profile liquidation cases and sends its condolences to the Murray family on their loss.

Cabinet directed law-enforcement agencies to leave no stone unturned, and swiftly bring the assassins and those who hired them to book.

■ Border Management Agency (BMA)

- Cabinet has applauded extensive preparatory work done to ensure that the BMA commences to operate as a stand-alone entity, with effect from 1 April 2023.
- The BMA is an important component of government's work to effectively secure South Africa's borders in a manner that protects national interests and enhances national security.

CABINET DECISIONS

■ Progress on Broadcast Digital Migration (BDM)

- Cabinet received an update on the BDM programme as the country prepares for the Analogue Switch-Off and the consultation undertaken with affected parties, including members of the public.
- Cabinet noted the progress made with the installation of set-top boxes for qualifying beneficiary households who applied for government assistance.
- Cabinet granted concurrence for the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies to gazette the Analogue Switch-Off date for South Africa.

■ White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity

- Cabinet approved the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity.
- South Africa is one of the

most biodiverse countries in the world and the White Paper will help the country take advantage of its rich biodiversity. It emphasises the importance of the biodiversity sector to South Africa's economic growth, conservation and equity in the biodiversity economy.

- The White Paper also highlights the importance of protecting indigenous knowledge and biodiversity.

■ Draft Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and Cooperatives Funding Policy

- Cabinet approved the publication of the Draft SMMEs and Cooperatives Funding Policy for public comments. The policy forms part of other interventions to support small businesses, including the National Integrated Small Enterprise Development Framework that was approved by Cabinet in 2022.
- The draft policy proposes

17 critical interventions that will enable the estimated 3.2 million SMMEs and 43 000 cooperatives in the country to thrive. These interventions include addressing fragmented financial support mechanisms, consolidating a database of small businesses, improving access to start-up capital and increasing business development support.

- Government has prioritised SMMEs and cooperatives' support because these businesses create the most jobs and provide the most opportunities for people to earn a living.
- The draft policy will be published in the Government Gazette and well as the website of the Department of Small Business Development on www.dsbd.gov.za

■ Water and Sanitation Framework

- Cabinet approved the Water and Sanitation Framework that will be used as a guide on how sanitation

services are planned, managed and regulated in a more equitable manner and aligned to technological developments.

- The Framework was also developed to respond to the service-delivery challenges witnessed in ageing and deteriorating infrastructure with poor maintenance, and infrastructure that was not designed to service many people.
- This Framework will also be used to address service-delivery gaps and it provides measures to lower the high number of households that are not served with adequate and safe sanitation in South Africa, and this includes abolishing the bucket system in informal settlements.
- The Framework further prescribes minimum qualifications and experience for process controllers at waste water treatment works and experience requirements for waste water treatment plant managers.

■ Policy and Policy Direction on Rapid Deployment of Electronic Communications Networks and Facilities

- Cabinet approved the Policy and Policy Direction on Rapid Deployment of Electronic Communications Networks and Facilities.
- The purpose of the Policy and Policy Direction is to direct the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) to prescribe regulations on procedures and processes for resolving disputes that may arise between an electronic communications network service licensee and any landowner during the deployment of electronic communications networks and facilities.
- Efficient deployment of electronic communications networks is a priority for the government as it supports the country's move towards the digital economy.

BILLS

■ Draft Electricity Amendment Bill

- Cabinet approved for submission to Parliament of the Draft Electricity Amendment Bill.
- The objectives of the Amendment Bill are to:

- strengthen the role of the National Energy Regulator of South Africa,
- strengthen the provisions related to licensable and unlicensable (exempted) activities;
- make provisions for the transitional measures for the creation of the Transmission System Operator (TSO); and

- define the functions of the TSO which, amongst others, include provision of an electricity trading platform on a multi-market basis, and provide access to the transmission network on a non-discriminatory basis.

■ Public Administration Management Amendment (PAMA) Bill of 2023

- Cabinet approved for submission to Parliament of the PAMA Bill of 2023.
- The main objective of the Bill is to improve service delivery by better alignment of human resources, gover-

nance and related arrangements across the three spheres of government.

- The Bill also removes unfair disparities in public administration and provides for the creation of a framework for collective bargaining.

■ Public Service Amendment Bill of 2023

- Cabinet approved for submission to Parliament of the Public Service Amendment Bill of 2023.
- The Bill aims to clarify the roles and duties of executive authorities in relation to Heads of Department (HoDs) and provides for

certain administrative powers to be vested with HoDs, while strategic powers must reside with executive authorities.

- The Bill also augments the role of the Director-General in The Presidency to create a Head of Public Administration and also clarifies the role of the Public Service Commission in respect of grievances.

■ Draft Electronic Communications Amendment Bill

- Cabinet approved the gazetting of the Electronic Communications

Amendment Bill for public comments.

- The purpose of the proposed amendments is to increase the level of competition in the telecommunications sector and drive down prices.
- The amendments to the Electronic Communications Act will allow ICASA the flexibility to regulate competition issues in the sector.



UPCOMING EVENTS

■ School holidays

- Cabinet wishes all learners and educators a well-deserved break.
- The safety of our children must remain a priority even during the school holidays.

■ Easter and Ramadan

- Cabinet extends its best wishes to the Christian and Muslim worshippers during the Easter and Ramadan period respectively.
- Cabinet appeals to those who will be travelling during this holiday period, to be respectful to other road users and adhere to the rules of the road.
- Drivers should keep to the speed limit, and ensure that their vehicles are roadworthy, and not drink and drive.

■ South Africa Investment Conference (SAIC)

- President Cyril Ramaphosa will lead South Africa's hosting of the 5th SAIC on 13 April 2023 at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg.
- Since the first investment conference in 2018, South Africa has attracted R1, 14

trillion in commitments. This represents 95 percent of our initial target and translates into investments across a wide range of economic sectors.

- Of the 152 investment commitments made previously, 45 projects have been completed, while a further 57 projects are currently under construction. These investments have resulted in new factories, call centres, solar power plants, undersea fibre optic cables, expansion of production lines and the adoption of new technologies.
- During the State of the Nation Address, the President announced a target of R2 trillion for the new round of investment mobilisation period.

■ African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Business Forum

- South Africa will host the AfCFTA Business Forum scheduled to take place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 16 to 19 April 2023, in partnership with the AfCFTA Secretariat.

- The AfCFTA Business Forum will serve as a platform for businesses and investors to connect with new partners and customers, expand their footprint and access new markets in the priority sectors identified.

■ Freedom Month

- South Africa will commemorate Freedom Month in April to mark the country's transition from the oppressive apartheid regime to a free democratic country. Today, all South Africans enjoy protection of the Constitution and we are free to be who we are and pursue our aspirations within the confines of the law.
- The commemoration is a reminder of the many sacrifices made to secure our freedom that led to our country's first democratic elections on 27 April 1994, the celebration of the gains of our freedom and our collective determination to work even harder to address the challenges that still plague our country and ensure that we leave no one behind.

MESSAGES

■ Congratulations

Cabinet extended its congratulations and well-wishes to:

- the South African comedian, Trevor Noah, who won Europe's prestigious Erasmus Prize, making him the first comedian to win the prize since Charlie Chaplin in 1965. The Erasmus Prize is an annual prize awarded to individuals or institutions that have made exceptional contributions to culture, society, or social science in Europe and the rest of the world.
- the recipients of the Inaugural Charlotte Maxeke African Women Leadership Awards, hosted by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor. The event recognises and honours exceptional African Women leaders whose achievements, influence, and contributions have advanced Africa's development in various sectors of society. The Awards also recognised contribution to the advancement of gender quality and women's empowerment.
- Banyana Banyana, as they prepare for their second appearance at the FIFA World Cup. They will travel to Serbia for a friendly on 10 April 2023.
- Bafana Bafana who have qualified for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations following a 2-1 win over Liberia in Monrovia on 28 March 2023.

■ Condolences

Cabinet expressed condolences to the family and friends of:

- Ambassador Moosa "Mosie" Moolla (88) who in 2013 was conferred The Order of Luthuli in Silver for his dauntless and excellent work in the liberation movement often at great risk to his life and for representing the interests of the liberation movement and South Africa in the international community. He was amongst the 155 Congress activists arrested on allegations of High Treason in December 1956.
- the three people who lost their lives during floods in the Port St. John's and surrounding areas.
- the five people who were killed and three wounded in two separate shooting incidents in Tongaat, KwaZulu-Natal on 23 March 2023.
- Mr Randall Robinson (81), an American activist and founder of TransAfrica, a high profile lobbying organisation in Washington that helped reshape the United States' foreign policy toward apartheid-era South Africa.

Cabinet also expressed condolences to:

- the government and people of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan on the loss of life following the earthquake that hit the countries.

Enquiries: Mr Michael Currin
Acting Government Spokesperson
Mobile: 082 462 7896 www.gcis.gov.za | www.gov.za

