



# government communications

Department:  
Government Communication & Information System  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **STATEMENT ON THE CABINET MEETING OF 19 NOVEMBER 2008**

Cabinet held its ordinary meeting in Cape Town yesterday, 19 November 2008.

Cabinet is extremely concerned about the political impasse that is creating a humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe. The reported outbreak of cholera in parts of that country is a clear indication that ordinary Zimbabweans are the true victims of their leaders' lack of political will and failure to demonstrate seriousness to resolve the political impasse. The Government is disappointed to note that political interests have taken priority at the expense of the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans.

South Africa calls on the leaders of Zimbabwe to take urgent steps to finalise the amendments to their constitution, the allocation of the remaining Cabinet posts and the formation of a representative Government without any further delay and before the situation of ordinary Zimbabweans degenerates any further. No amount of political disagreement can ever justify the suffering that ordinary Zimbabweans are being subjected to at the moment. Like SADC, South Africa would like to see a political settlement sooner rather than later so that the region could start focussing on the most urgent measures needed to rebuild Zimbabwe's economy.

Cabinet decided that South Africa should immediately assist the people of Zimbabwe to address the cholera outbreak as well as scaling up malaria control activities in the cross border area. South Africa is already in discussions with multilateral agencies such as SADC and the World Health Organisation in this regard. A strategy will be put in place on an urgent basis to provide assistance to the people of Zimbabwe and to provide support to our health authorities in the Limpopo province to enable them to cope with the serious situation.

An Interdepartmental Task Team will be set up urgently to identify and implement measures to ensure that the reported service delivery crisis in Zimbabwe does not lead to increased cross-border movement to the health facilities in the Limpopo province that are already over-stretched. The team will be led by the Department of Health and will include the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Water Affairs and Forestry, Provincial and Local Government. Other departments will be joining the team on a needs basis.

The meeting noted that the window of opportunity for South Africa to provide assistance to the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe had passed due to the failure of Zimbabwean political leaders to form a representative government. Cabinet decided that the approved R300 million will be retained for agricultural assistance to Zimbabwe. However, this money will be only disbursed once a representative government was in place and in time for the next planting season in April 2009. The Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs will prepare a proposal on South Africa's contribution to address the immediate humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe.

World AIDS Day will be observed on 1 December 2008, marking its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, under the theme "Stop Aids: Leadership and Unity". The national event will be held at the Sahara Stadium in Durban and will be addressed by The Deputy President, Ms Baleka Mbete. Events will also be held in other provinces to observe the day. Government, in partnership with the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), calls on South Africans to participate in activities that are aimed at raising awareness about HIV and AIDS. HIV, AIDS and TB remain national priorities requiring urgent action by all sectors of society.

Government programmes are already in full swing to implement the national strategic plan including: measures to ensure that all mothers with HIV remain healthy; all babies are born free of HIV; increasing access to ARV's; promoting healthy lifestyles through reducing sexual partners and using condoms; knowing your status; and ensuring that children from households that are affected by HIV and AIDS are protected and supported to complete their schooling and are protected from all forms of abuse and neglect. HIV, AIDS and TB have impacted negatively on communities, especially the poor. Through strengthening our partnership under the leadership of SANAC, we can ensure that our health system works better in responding to all illnesses caused by HIV, AIDS and TB.

The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children takes place from 25 November – 10 December 2008. The campaign was formally launched this past Monday and the launch ceremony will be held on 22 November 2008 in Beaufort West in the Western Cape. This ceremony will be addressed by the Deputy President. During this period, the Victims Charter and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development will also be promoted. Government once again calls on all South Africans to support the campaign by participating in activities to raise awareness against women and child abuse. This is the time for everyone to take a stand.

The Electricity Pricing Policy was approved. The objectives of policy include setting a clear framework on the determination of electricity prices; ensures cost reflective tariffs while protecting the poor; sets an appropriate balance between meeting social equity and economic growth; creates certainty and predictability; and seeks to ensure the long term sustainability of the electricity industry. The adoption of the policy follows extensive consultation with stakeholders, including a discussion at NEDLAC and at the Energy Summit held on 14 May 2008. The

policy will be submitted to the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) for consideration.

The holiday season is once again upon us and it presents challenges of safety and risky behaviour among many of our citizens. Government is implementing a number of campaigns that are aimed at making sure that all South Africans can enjoy safer and well-deserved holidays. These campaigns include Arrive Alive and the 16 Days of Activism against the abuse of women and Children. However, all South Africans have a responsibility to ensure that these holidays are safer for all by taken steps such as making sure that children are not left unsupervised in streets, beaches, swimming pools and at home; road users must obey the rules of the road, especially observing speed limits and not to drink and drive; reporting violent behaviour at home and in communities; and cooperating with law enforcement agencies.

The Budget allocations for the 2009/11 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) were approved. President Kgalema Motlanthe will convene the President's Coordinating Council (PCC) to discuss ways to ensure that provincial spending complies with the national priorities as set out in the Medium term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and the government programme of action.

Reports on preparations for the FIFA Confederations' Cup and 2010 FIFA World Cup finals were noted. Whilst the programme for the construction of the stadia was on track, cost overruns remain a major concern. National government will allocate an additional R1.4 billion to contribute towards the cost over-runs for the construction of the 2010 stadia. National Treasury is looking into this matter to ensure that cost management measures are put in place by the host cities to prevent any further cost overruns. The report also indicated that plans were in place and being implemented in the areas of transport, safety and security, energy, social legacy and arts and culture.

The meeting noted that the draw for the FIFA Confederations Cup will take place on Saturday, 22 November 2008 in Sandton. The Confederations Cup tournament itself, also known as the 'Champions of Champions', will take place in South Africa on 14-28 June 2009. This tournament is the precursor to the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals and will provide South Africa with the opportunity to demonstrate our readiness and ability to host world class events as we say '*Ke nako-celebrate Africa's humanity*'.

Cabinet noted the outcome of the Summit of the Leaders Group of Twenty (G20) countries which was held in the US last weekend. This Summit was preceded by the meeting of African Ministers of Finance and Planning and Governors of Central Banks which was held in Tunis. In welcoming South Africa's participation at this gathering of global leaders, Cabinet also reiterated the need to increase the African voice at these meetings. South Africa welcomes the outcome of the summit but hopes that the summit will encourage leaders of the developed

nations to support the move to conclude the Doha Development Round of Negotiations as soon as possible.

Cabinet noted the progress report on the establishment of a National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). The Minister in the Presidency was mandated to address all matters pertaining to timeframes, transitional arrangements and the finalisation of the NYDA legislation.

Measures and Guidelines for the coordination of South Africa's international engagements were approved. A Consultative Forum on International Relations (CFIR) will be established (under the stewardship of the Department of Foreign Affairs) to ensure better coordination between departments and across the different spheres; ensure that information on international engagements is shared; and provide foreign policy guidance for international trips.

Cabinet approved the Agreement on Mutual Acceptance of Oenological Practices and the World Wine Trade Group's Agreement on Requirements for Wine Labelling. The agreements introduce global standards, simplified labelling requirements and will open export markets that were previously not accessible due to elaborate, costly certification and labelling processes. The agreements will be submitted to Parliament for ratification.

The meeting concurred with the revised White Paper on South Africa's participation in International Peace Missions. The revised White Paper underpins South Africa's foreign policy doctrine of promoting peaceful resolution of conflicts, the creation of an environment that is conducive for sustainable development and commitment to rules-based multilateralism in a just and equitable world. South Africa's involvement in peace missions will be guided by the principles of a clear mandate; consent; impartiality; minimum use of force; credibility; legitimacy; promotion of National and local ownership; entry, transition and exit strategy and transparency.

Cabinet noted the country report that will be tabled at the World Congress against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescence, in Brazil from 25 to 28 November 2008.

The meeting noted and supported South Africa's hosting of the 68<sup>th</sup> International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) plenary meeting in September or October 2009, in Cape Town.

Government would like to congratulate Bafana Bafana for their heart-warming victory against the indomitable lions of the Cameroon. This victory is a sign that the process of rebuilding the team is on course as we get ready to play against the best teams in the world in the FIFA Confederations Cup in 2009 and the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Announcements:

- Reverend Frank Chikane has signed a flexible service contract that allows him to continue to serve government by performing a limited number of functions that will be assigned to him by the President until the elections in 2009.
- Mr Thabo Masebe, the Head of Communications in the Gauteng Premier's office, has been seconded to the post of Presidential Spokesperson until the General elections in 2009. He is a former Chief Director in GCIS. He can be reached at **+27 82 410 8087** from today.

The following appointments were approved:

- The term of office for the current Board of Directors of Khula Enterprise Finance Limited (Khula) was extended for twelve (12) months. Ms Nomgando Matyumza was appointed as a new member of the Board
- The extension of term of office for a one (1) year period for the Chairperson and five (5) remaining National Lotteries Board (NLB) members.

**ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS (GCIS)**

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