



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Statement on Cabinet meeting of 21 February 2007

22 February 2007

Cabinet held its third meeting of the year in Cape Town yesterday, 21 February 2007. In addition to the regular business of Cabinet, the decisions of the January Cabinet Lekgotla were formally approved.

Cabinet would like congratulate the people of Lesotho on their peaceful and successful general election which represents another demonstration of the continent's commitment to democracy. These elections further promote a climate for socio-economic development and integration within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region in pursuit of African Union and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programmes. We trust that the people of Lesotho will respect the outcome of these elections and the rule of law.

The meeting noted, with deep concern, the threat posed by the floods in Mozambique and their impact on communities. All South Africans share the pain and suffering of Mozambicans during this difficult period. South Africa will continue to provide assistance to the people and government of Mozambique as we have done in the past.

Cabinet noted, with concern, the reported tensions and violence between the Somali community and South African residents of Motherwell in the Eastern Cape province. We wish to call on South Africans to exercise restraint in dealing with difficult issues and to discourage people from taking the law into their own hands. Somalis and other immigrants must be assured of the government's rejection of violence against them and our commitment to ensure that lasting solutions are found to the causes of the conflict and tensions. Cabinet fully supports the initiatives of provincial and local leaders to prevent any further violence. Our police services will and must deal with any one found to be inciting violence and attacks. We should all be reminded that we are a peace loving nation and our national interests will never be served by creating the impression that our African brothers and sisters are not welcome in our country.

As part of our commitment to contribute to socio-economic and political stability of our continent, Cabinet approved the request from the African Union to deploy 1 100 members of the South African National Defence Force to Burundi to be part of the African Union Special Task Force. This deployment will contribute to peace and stability in Burundi and ensure that the progress towards peace in that country is not reversed.

Cabinet approved the National Information Society and Development (ISAD) Plan as a framework for building an inclusive information society in South Africa. A Ministerial ISAD Committee, chaired by the Presidency, will be set up to co-ordinate government activities in this regard. A partnership forum has been launched to co-ordinate activities of Government and civil society. This partnership will be known as the Information Society and Development Intergovernmental Relations Forum (ISADIGRF).

The meeting noted progress regarding South Africa's migration from analogue to digital broadcasting, in line with global trends. It approved that the digital signal be switched on, on 1 November 2008 and that the analogue signal be switched off on 1 November 2011, thus, allowing a three year period of dual illumination. Further, the meeting approved the retention of sufficient frequency spectrum for broadcasting purposes to provide for new television channels for specialised services that would be dedicated to education, health, and youth, small to medium enterprises, sports; and three regional service channels that would cater for three channels each.

The Department of Trade and Industry will interact with television manufacturers and retailers to sensitise them to the conversion. A communication campaign will be launched to inform and educate the public about the implications of this migration.

Cabinet approved a policy and strategy for the implementation of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in government. All new software developed for or by the Government will be based on open standards and government will itself migrate current software to FOSS. This strategy will, among other things, lower administration costs and enhance local Information Technology (IT) skills. The meeting noted that all the major IT vendors in the country have both supported the initiative and made contributions to the development of FOSS. Government departments will incorporate FOSS in their planning henceforth. By April 2007, a project office will be set up by the Department of Science and Technology, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and State Information Technology Agency (SITA) to ensure smooth implementation of FOSS throughout the country.

Cabinet noted progress with regard to the fulfilment of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) guarantees to FIFA in preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. A service provider will be appointed to provide adequate telecommunications for the transportation of signals to and from the stadia. Further, a second Sentech teleport will be built to provide the satellite link as back-up to the telecommunications infrastructure required for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. An International Broadcast Centre will be established for the World Cup Finals which will serve as a legacy project for local content generation and development beyond the world Cup finals. The final site for the Broadcast centre will be determined by Cabinet in the near future.

Cabinet approved a framework to align infrastructure delivery cycles with the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budget cycle in order to improve planning, implementation and better cash-flow management that would, among other things, deal with the fourth quarter expenditure spike. This framework accommodates the long lead time before infrastructure projects reach the construction stage. The infrastructure delivery cycle will be amended to include an Infrastructure Programme Management Plan (IPMP) and an Infrastructure Programme Implementation Plan (IPIP) which will be mandatory for all departments. Best practice approaches will be adopted to include budget cycles that commit funds for the duration of the project without leading to the so-called roll-overs. This framework will require the appointment of appropriately skilled built-environment professionals across all relevant departments, provinces and local government.

The meeting noted that the SA Police Service had introduced a new performance management system to improve organisational performance of the service. This system is part of the overall change management strategy to improve service delivery and strengthening our capacity to fight crime. It includes: setting of national performance standards and targets; performance assessments; identification of non-performing police stations; adoption of corrective measures for the non performing stations and the introduction of performance incentives for the police stations that meet the crime fighting targets. Other aspects include better deployment of personnel and a performance management chart to measure and monitor performance of police stations. Cabinet

resolved that this system must be communicated to communities which could play a key role in monitoring the performance of police stations around the country.

Cabinet noted reports of hoax emails and SMS messages concerning the health of former President Nelson Mandela. These irresponsible messages predict racial conflict in the event of Madiba's passing away.

Cabinet wishes to reiterate what was said by the spokesperson for the former President, that there is no truth to the speculation about his health. As in the case of all public figures, the public would be informed of such matters through official channels and without delay.

Attention should not be paid to such rumours or to malicious predictions of conflict. The principles that Madiba stands for are enshrined in our constitution and enjoy the unqualified support of this government and the majority of all South Africans. We call upon the media not to give these malicious messages any undue prominence or credence as this only plays into mischievous hands. Government has every confidence that the overwhelming majority of every sector of South African society would not allow a few individuals to deflect them from the irreversible progress we are making in building a united nation.

Cabinet noted the successful interaction between the media and Cabinet clusters during the media briefing week. These briefings assist the media to give the public an understanding of government's Programme of Action following the President's State of the Nation Address.

In this context, the meeting took exception to some highly personalised comments on the state of health of the Minister of Health who led one of the briefings. Cabinet regards media reports about her performance at the press briefing as inaccurate and exaggerated. While we respect everyone's right to criticise Members of the Executive, such personalised attacks are not constructive. We condemn the statement by one of the political parties about her health as appalling and extremely distasteful. We trust that the majority of South Africans will join us in wishing Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang a speedy recovery and good health.

The following appointments were approved:

- The nomination of Mr G Griffiths as an Executive Board member the South African Airways (SAA) was approved.
- Mr M Moroka, Director General of the Department of Public Works
- Deputy Directors-General (DDGs) in the Departments of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Provincial and Local Government, National Treasury and Correctional Services (Deputy National Commissioner)
- Two DDGs in the Department of Trade and Industry.

The following Bills were approved:

- Finance Bill (finalisation of unauthorised expenditure for 1993/4 to 2003/04)
- Division of Revenue Bill
- Transport Agencies General Laws Amendment Bill, 2007 for submission to Parliament
- Science and Technology Laws Amendment Bill which will amend the following Acts:
 - National Research Foundation Act 23 of 1998
 - Africa Institute Act 68 of 2001
 - Academy of Science of South Act 67 of 2001
 - Natural Scientific Professions Act 27 of 2003

- Scientific Research Council 46 of 1988.

Enquiries

Themba Maseko - Government Spokesperson

Cell: 083 645 0810

Issued by: Government Communications (GCIS)

[top](#)

[Cabinet statements](#)

Year: 2007

Media Statement date: Thursday, February 22, 2007

printer-friendly version