

DECLARATION OF THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER SUMMIT ON ESKOM APPLICATION FOR PRICE INCREASE

We, representatives of civil society, organised labour, business and government, have joined here together to ensure a common and effective approach to the electricity emergency now facing South Africa.

Any response to the emergency must avoid increasing the burdens on the poor and ensure sustainable growth and development for the future. South Africans must work together to ensure that, despite the electricity shortfall, we achieve and indeed exceed the AsgiSA targets for growth, poverty and unemployment.

PRICING

Stakeholders will work together to agree on the required price increase over the next five years, ensuring that there is no excessive increase in any one year and developing specific proposals on how to protect the poor. Achieving that aim must be done in a way that ensures the poor and working people still have access to affordable electricity. The new price proposal must also avoid any unnecessary shocks to the economy.

For this reason, we welcome the initiative on pricing brought about through the intervention of the ANC. We support the submission of this initiative to NERSA, and urge NERSA to take it into account as the common position of all stakeholders.

THE IMMEDIATE CHALLENGE

Winter is approaching. It is crucial that we avoid unplanned black outs, which impose extraordinary costs on the economy and society. We therefore call on all our people to save electricity by reducing use of lights and appliances, including geysers and heaters. Households, commercial and government buildings can still cut their electricity usage substantially with relatively low social and economic costs.

Measures to bring about savings in the coming months must avoid an undue burden on industry and services in order to protect employment now as well as our national well being in the future.

We must develop a culture of savings across our society, mobilising all actors and media – from churches to unions, from schools and youth groups to government Ministers – to get the message across.

In addition, we need to work to ensure that existing generating and distribution capacity is operated and maintained as efficiently as possible.

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

A sustainable solution to the energy emergency must involve:

- Changes in behaviour and technology by both industry and households to use electricity far more efficiently
- Realistic pricing policies that ensure the poor have affordable access to electricity as a basic need in modern society, as well as supporting shared economic growth
- Strong support for new generation, led by the public sector but supplemented where possible by co-generation, with increasing use of cleaner technologies as well as collaboration across the southern African region
- Substantial investment in the distribution network to avoid breakdowns at municipal level.

- Measures to protect workers who may be affected by reduced use of energy, whether as a result of higher prices or because of rationing, including through active labour-market policies.

GOVERNANCE

Civil society, all spheres of government and key economic stakeholders must work together to address the national emergency in ways that support our national goals of poverty alleviation, employment creation and dynamic economic growth. There needs to be greater transparency and sharing of information, including about controversial issues like load shedding, Eskom operations and exports of electricity.

Electricity is not a normal commodity, but affects both social and economic development. It follows that key decisions in response to the crisis must be led by government but tested with stakeholders in terms of their socio-economic impact. No single agency should make unilateral decisions that affect the future of us all. Local government must be involved much more consistently in decision-making, and assured of the resources required to implementing them.

This Summit represents an important example of how we can work together to ensure more appropriate outcomes. We will continue to work together to address this challenge.

We wish to thank all those who made it possible: above all, the ANC, the relevant government Ministers and officials, the Executive Director of NEDLAC and the activists and officials of the NEDLAC constituencies.

ATTENDANCE

The National Stakeholder Summit was attended by over 300 delegates drawn from National Organisations and Government: **(Annexure A)**

ANNEXURE A

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS THAT ATTENDED THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER SUMMIT

ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF DELEGATES
LABOUR	(45)
BUSINESS UNITY SOUTH AFRICA	(55)
GOVERNMENT	(45)
COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS AND NGO'S	(45)
PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE – Minerals & Energy	(3)
PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE – Public Enterprises.	(2)
SARB	(5)
ANC	(50)
SACP	(10)
SALGA	(10)
SOLIDARITY	(2)
EDI	(4)
ESKOM	(10)
SANGOCO	10
NON AFFILIATED	30
TOTAL	324