



**PRESIDENTIAL
CLIMATE COMMISSION**
TOWARDS A JUST TRANSITION

The State of Climate Action in South Africa

Report Presentation to the Commission Meeting
7 June 2024

About the report

- The PCC's first assessment of climate action in South Africa
- A snapshot of South Africa's progress towards the achievement of key indicators that support the country staying on a pathway to reducing emissions, enhancing climate resilience, and improving lives and livelihoods
- Focuses on where progress is being made, where there are critical gaps in climate action, and the necessary shifts/changes that will be required
- The PCC will make separate and subsequent recommendations about how to bridge these gaps, and develop its own tracking benchmarks for future reports, with an increasing focus on justice



Report development process

- Assessed progress towards several priority indicators of change, encompassing mitigation, adaptation, finance, and the just transition, reviewing available data up until the end of 2023
- Studied the environment in which climate policy is made in South Africa, looking at the political, development, and economic factors that help or harm progress
- Interviewed experts to gather primary data and ground findings
- Conducted the first nationally representative survey on the just transition, surveying more than 3000 South Africans on their perceptions, attitudes, and support for climate action and the just transition
- Peer reviewed by 40 experts, from a range of stakeholder groups (national government, local government, academia/think tanks, CSOs, and business)



Report outline

Section 1: The Environment for Climate Action

Chapter 1: Social, Economic, and Policy Context

Chapter 2: Governance, Implementation Capacity, and Finance

Chapter 3: Public Perceptions and Attitudes on Climate Change and a Just Transition

Section 2: The Race to Build Climate Resilience

Chapter 4: Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Action: The Race to Build Resilience

Chapter 5: A More Equal and Climate-resilient Agriculture Sector

Chapter 6: Securing Water

Section 3: Mitigation: Emissions, Targets and Progress

Chapter 7: Emissions: Trends, Drivers, and Meeting the Mitigation NDC

Chapter 8: Decarbonising Energy Supply

Chapter 9: Improving Public Transport and Shifting to New Energy Vehicles



Key Findings



The Mismatch Between Commitments and Action

- While there is strong public support and policy commitments for acting on climate change and driving a just transition in South Africa, there is a notable disparity between policy ambitions and practical outcomes, in part due to:
 - Contradictory public policies and positions, particularly regarding the future of the energy sector, as government wrestles with immediate trade-offs between energy security, economic growth, the health impacts of pollution from fossil fuels, and climate commitments.
 - Inadequate technical and financial capacity, which constrains local governments as the frontline responders to climate change and the just transition.
 - Limited investments in the just transition, from public, private, international, and domestic sources.



The Race to Build Climate Resilience

- South Africa's vulnerability to climate change has steadily increased.
- According to recent data, the country's food and water sectors are the most vulnerable to climate change due to projected changes in its cereal yields, low capacity to acquire and deploy agriculture technology, existing water scarcity, and limited dam storage capacity per capita.
- South Africa's readiness to leverage public and private investments for adaptation action has decreased, due to high and persistent social inequality, a comparatively complex business environment, and declining state capacity.
- National policies and commitments have set out a comprehensive approach to building climate resilience, but only 28 of the 95 actions outlined by the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy are listed as fully implemented or currently being implemented.



The Race to Reduce GHG Emissions

- South Africa is currently the 14th largest GHG emitter in the world, and the largest emitter on the African continent. The production of coal-based electricity is the largest contributor to South Africa's emissions, accounting for more than half of the country's emissions. 2022 emissions were 479 MtCO₂e.
- The country's revised NDC sets a commitment for national GHG emissions to be in the range of 398-510 MtCO₂e in 2025 and 350 – 420 MtCO₂e in 2030. South Africa has also set an aspirational goal for reaching net-zero CO₂ emissions by 2050.
- South Africa is on track to meet its 2025 GHG emissions target and, according to the government's draft SET Report, the low target of the 2030 NDC (350 MtCO₂e) could be achieved with more ambitious actions in the electricity and transport sectors.
- The SET report cautions, however, that if key policies—such as the 2019 Integrated Resource Plan with its prescribed electricity build plan and decommissioning plan—are not achieved, the 2030 target in the NDC may not be achieved. This is pertinent given Eskom's recent decision to further delay the decommissioning of three of its oldest coal-fired power plants (Hendrina, Camden, and Grootvlei).

