MEDIA STATEMENT

MINING SECTOR ADOPTS PROACTIVE STEPS TO BE COMPLIANT WITH CLIMATE CHANGE REQUIREMENTS

The Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment heard yesterday during public hearings it conducted virtually on the Climate Change Bill, that the South African mining sector has made massive strides in trying to reduce carbon emissions.

Ms Mudau, a representative of the Mineral’s Council of SA, said the Council acknowledged climate change as a serious global challenge and that it supported actions that were set through the Paris Agreement and the Glasgow Climate Pact.

He said: “The mining industry has contributed to South Africa’s response through the implementation of policy instruments like goal to net zero, the nationally determined contributions, climate change Bill, carbon tax, and the just energy transition framework.”

She revealed that the industry had made progress in decarbonising the industry and that the board had adopted a climate change position that outlined mandatory commitments for member companies. “We’ve also gone a step further by developing a guideline that will assist our members in developing our own climate change plans.”

The committee had earlier received presentations from the Business Unity South Africa, Section 27, and the University of Cape Town. Presenters raised issues around the unaligned carbon tax and carbon budgets, penalties in case one exceeded the carbon budget, the role and involvement of the basic education, as well as an enhanced statutory power for the Presidential Commission on Climate Change (PCCC).

Acting Chairperson of the committee, Mr Phagiso Modise, told the participants that climate change was no longer an environmental issue. “We have to focus on the benefit of the early actions, which for us as South Africans we running out of time.”

Busa stated that it was urgent that South Africa enacts climate change legislation and that it needed to be supported by policies and clear measures. He said: “We have to diversify our economy so that sectors are destined for new growth opportunities. We could not make decisions that will deindustrialise South Africa when it has to catch up with the developed world.”

Busa’s representative said the process of developing the Nationally Determined Contributions should be enshrined in the climate change Bill. Members of the committee engaged the presenters on such issues as the environmental authorisation for mining companies, the impact on other legislations, availability of technologies geared towards supporting cleaner economies, as well as the role of the PCCC in case a president was someone who lacked interest in climate change.

Ms Mudau said it was important for their members to decarbonise in order for the industry to catch up and meet international standards in a just manner. The Bill was supported by the majority of participants during the hearings.

**By Sibongile Maputi**

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