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# IMBEWU

*Sustainability Legal Specialists (Pty) Ltd*



## FEBRUARY 2020 SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

*For a copy of the Safety, Health and Environmental (SHE) Legislation Update, please go to:*  
<https://imbewu.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Monthly-SHE-Legislation-Update-February-2020.pdf>

### INTERNATIONAL

### GENERAL

**CLIMATE CHANGE:** According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, January 2020 was the warmest January on record. **Source: Climate Action dated 14 February 2020.** <http://www.climateaction.org/news/january-2020-noted-as-warmest-since-records-began>  
A recent study has shown that scientists have been significantly underestimating the amount of methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas, humans are emitting through the combustion of fossil fuels. **Source: Science Daily dated 19 February 2020.** <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/02/200219113746.htm> New research has found that the current destruction of the Amazon forest caused by loggers and farmers may lead to it becoming a source of carbon emissions rather than a carbon sink within the next decade. **Source: The Guardian dated 4 March 2020.** <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/04/tropical-forests-losing-their-ability-to-absorb-carbon-study-finds>

**AUSTRALIAN FIRES:** Scientists have reported that climate change increased the risk of the hot and dry conditions which are likely to lead to bushfires in Australia by approximately 30%. Furthermore, if the global average temperature increases by 2°C, the occurrence of such

conditions will happen four times as often. **Source: BBC News dated 4 March 2020.** . <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-51742646>

**RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS:** 2019 saw the largest annual number of solar projects (35) exceeding 200MW being commissioned worldwide. **Source: Business Day dated 28 February 2020.** <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/world/2020-02-28-solar-is-starting-to-scale-worldwide-except-in-the-us/> New research has found that it will be possible to fully transition to renewable energy worldwide by 2050. This was established by researchers at Stanford University through the collation of 47-peer reviewed papers. **Source: World Economic Forum dated 28 February 2020.** <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/02/renewable-energy-future-carbon-emissions/>

**HYDROCARBON EXPLORATION:** Equinor has abandoned its \$132 million proposal for exploratory drilling for oil and gas in the Great Australian Bight which is considered to be one of the most pristine marine environments globally. Equinor is the fourth energy company to abandon its plans to drill in the area. **Source: BBC News dated 25 February 2020.** <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-51623764>

**CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):** As the outbreak of the coronavirus has been traced to the consumption of wild animals, China has banned the trade of such animals as food. However, conservationists are concerned that the ban does not extend to the trade of wild animals for fur, medicine or research. **Source: The New York Times dated 27 February 2020.** <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/27/science/coronavirus-pangolin-wildlife-ban-china.html>

## PUBLICATIONS

**ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE:** The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) has released a report titled "*The State of Global Environmental Governance 2019*" which is focused on the trends of 2019's environmental negotiations. **Source: IISD dated February 2020.** <https://www.iisd.org/sites/default/files/publications/environmental-governance-2019.pdf>

**CLIMATE CHANGE:** Future Earth has released a report titled "*Our Future on Earth*" which looks at the current climate change impacts that society is experiencing and links it to the most recent developments in research. **Source: Future Earth dated February 2020.** <https://futureearth.org/publications/our-future-on-earth/>

**MINING:** The "*Responsible Mining Index 2020*" was published which assesses the environmental, social, economic and governance policies and practices of mining companies. **Source: Responsible Mining Index 2020 dated February 2020.** <https://2020.responsibleminingindex.org/en/key-findings>

## NATIONAL

## GENERAL

**CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON SOUTH AFRICA:** The Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Barbara Creecy, has recognised that

climate change is a significant risk to South Africa's socio-economic development, stating that '[s]cience tells us that our country and continent are warming much faster than the rest of the world'. **Source: News24 dated 18 February 2020.** <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/climate-change-threatens-sa-socio-economic-development-creecy-20200218>

**STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS 2020 (SONA):** SONA was delivered by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 13 February 2020. The full address can be found at <https://www.gov.za/SONA2020>. One of the developments covered in the President's address was that the fifth bid window of the renewable energy independent power producers (REIPP) will be opened by his administration. **Source: IOL dated 13 February 2020.** <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/sona-2020-ramaphosa-promises-increased-eskom-capacity-to-deal-with-blackouts-42675328>

Furthermore, it was announced that government will initiate the procurement of emergency electricity that can supply energy to the grid within three to twelve months from date of being granted approval. Municipalities will also be allowed to procure their own electricity from independent power producers (IPPs) upon the amendment of schedule 2 of the Electricity Regulation Act. **Source: Fin24 dated 13 February 2020.** <https://www.fin24.com/Economy/Eskom/ramaphosa-says-govt-will-let-municipalities-buy-power-from-independent-producers-20200213>

Following the SONA, the City of Cape Town applied to Treasury to set up an IPP office to implement a yet-to-be prepared Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) and to procure renewable energy from IPPs. This is subject to the proposed, but not yet gazetted, amendments to be made to schedule 2 of the Electricity Regulation Act. **Source: Daily Maverick dated 16 February 2020.** <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-02-16-cape-town-moves-to-set-up-own-electricity-supply/>

**MINING:** In the Mineral Resources and Energy Minister, Gwede Mantashe's address to the attendees of the Mining Indaba 2020, he revealed that dialogue with investors will be initiated to form a power generation company separate to Eskom. Furthermore, he stated that the decision has been made to allow mining companies to generate electricity for their own consumption without a licence. **Source: Financial Mail dated 3 February 2020.** <https://www.businesslive.co.za/fm/features/2020-02-03-mantashe-drops-electricity-bombshell-at-mining-indaba/> Sibanye-Stillwater is now a member of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), which promotes "a safe, fair and sustainable global mining and metals industry", having been thoroughly assessed according to the ICMM's standards for company membership. **Source: Mining Weekly dated 27 February 2020.** [http://www.miningweekly.com/article/sibanye-among-three-new-icmm-members-2020-02-27/rep\\_id:3650](http://www.miningweekly.com/article/sibanye-among-three-new-icmm-members-2020-02-27/rep_id:3650)

## PUBLICATIONS

**BIODIVERSITY DISCLOSURE:** The Endangered Wildlife Trust's (EWT) second "Biodiversity Performance Rating of SA Companies" has been published. Nearly 350 JSE-listed and state-owned enterprises were assessed and it was found that reporting on biodiversity is not considered to be a material issue for the majority of these companies. **Source: Biodiversity Disclosure Project dated 18 February 2020.** <https://www.bdprotocol.org/>

## CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS

### NATIONAL

**POWER AND ELECTRICITY WORLD AFRICA:** 31 March – 1 April 2020 in Johannesburg.

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN MARINE WASTE NETWORK:** 20-23 April 2020 in Port Elizabeth.

## INTERNATIONAL

**SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT FORUM EUROPE 2020:** 10 March 2020 in Paris, France.

**GLOBAL RECYCLING DAY:** 18 March 2020.

**WORLD WATER DAY:** 22 March 2020.

**EARTH HOUR 2020:** 28 March 2020.

**50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY:** 22 April 2020.

**IMBEWU has developed a new electronic audit program which improves the efficiency, output and cost effectiveness of our environmental legal compliance audits. For a list of key features of this program to be utilised by our sustainability legal consultants conducting an audit at your operation, please see: <https://imbewu.co.za/she-legal-compliance-evaluations/> or contact Lulu Lewis for more information.**

### **IMBEWU's environmental note: How to reduce your food's carbon footprint:**

<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2020/2/20/21144017/local-food-carbon-footprint-climate-environment>

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