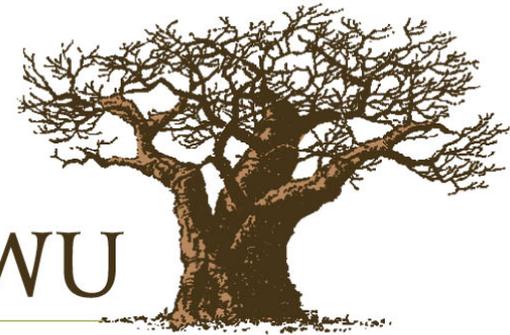




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DECEMBER 2020 SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

For a copy of the Safety, Health and Environmental (SHE) Legislation Update, please go to:
<https://imbewu.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Monthly-SHE-Legislation-Update-December-2020.pdf>

INTERNATIONAL

GENERAL

CLIMATE CHANGE LEADING TO WORSENING HEALTH IMPACTS – A recent report has found that Climate Change has had many negative impacts on human health including 296 000 heat-related premature deaths, a decline of between 1.8% and 5.6% in global yield potential for major crops, increasing sea levels, major droughts and increased bushfires. The report found extreme heat continues to rise around the world and particularly affects the elderly. If we focus on an effective response to climate change this will greatly benefit the future state of human health. **Source: The Conversation dated 3 December 2020.** <https://theconversation.com/climate-change-is-resulting-in-profound-immediate-and-worsening-health-impacts-over-120-researchers-say-151027>

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE WORLD'S LARGEST HYBRID RENEWABLE ENERGY 'MEGAPARK' – India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, laid the first foundation stone of what is set to be the largest hybrid renewable energy park in the world. It will be about the size of Singapore and is estimated to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in India by up to 50 million tons each year. **Source: Interesting Engineering dated 21 December 2020.** <https://interestingengineering.com/india-is-building-the-worlds-largest-hybrid-renewable-energy-megapark>

THE LARGEST VERTICAL FARM IN EUROPE HAS JUST BEEN OPENED: – Inside a Warehouse in an industrial zone in Copenhagen, Denmark, a new vertical farm has been opened that will produce hundreds of tonnes of lettuce, herbs and kale over the coming months. Vertical farming in which plants are grown in racks may help meet the world's growing food demands. Nordic Harvest's futuristic vertical farm uses 20 000 specialised LEDs to provide light and robots to deliver seeds throughout the 7000 square meter hangar. The entire facility is powered by renewable energy from Denmark's windfarms. **Source: France24.com dated 7 December 2020.** <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20201207-a-wind-powered-vertical-farm-giant-urban-farm-opens-in-denmark>

OLD ELECTRIC POWER PLANTS BEING USED TO HOUSE SUPER-SIZED BATTERIES – The Moss Landing Power Plant in California is currently being used to store a 300-megawatt lithium-ion battery with a second super-sized battery to come online in 2021. “Energy storage is actually the true bridge to a clean-energy future” – Bernadette Del Chiaro, Executive Director of the California Solar and Storage Association. “Big battery” technology could be the solution to the intermittency of wind and solar power generation. **Source: Future Planet dated 18 December 2020.** <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201217-renewable-power-the-worlds-largest-battery>

14 KEY NATIONS ANNOUNCE COMMITMENT TO THE WORLD'S MOST FAR-REACHING PACT TO PROTECT OCEANS – Despite the challenges faced in 2020, the leaders of 14 countries have united to sustainably manage all the oceans in their national jurisdictions by 2025 and set aside 30 percent of the seas as marine protected areas by 2030. This is in line with the United Nations Campaign known as “30 by 30”. These 14 Nations combined, represent roughly 40 % of the world's coastlines, 30 % of the offshore exclusive economic zones, 20 % of the world's fisheries and 20 % of the world's shipping fleet. **Source: National Geographic dated 4 December 2020.** <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2020/12/in-rare-show-of-solidarity-14-key-nations-commit-to-protect-oceans/#close>

AIR POLLUTION RECOGNISED AS “A MATERIAL CONTRIBUTION” TO THE DEATH OF A NINE-YEAR-OLD CHILD. In a ground-breaking court ruling in Southwark Coroner's Court in London, United Kingdom, exposure to excessive levels of air pollution, was found to be a major factor in the death of a 9-year-old child. The child suffered an asthma attack and died in 2013 and her rare type of asthma made her particularly susceptible to the impacts of air pollution. Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) near Ella's home exceeded World Health Organization and European Union Guidelines and were ruled to be a contributing factor in her death. **Source: BBC News dated 17 December 2020.** - <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-55352247>

USE OF MERCURY IN MINING BANNED IN ZIMBABWE - Zimbabwe has joined several countries in banning the use of mercury in mining and placing controls on its release from industrial operations. Mercury is highly toxic and poses a serious risk to public health if it contaminates food or ground water. **Source: Sowetan Live dated 29 December 2020.** - <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/africa/2020-12-29-zimbabwe-bans-use-of-mercury-in-mining/>

PUBLICATIONS

15 CONSERVATION ISSUES TO WATCH IN 2021 – A group of 25 Conservation Practitioners and researchers have identified the 15 most pressing conservation issues “society may urgently need to address” in 2021. Some of the issues highlighted include: suffocating reefs, seabird patrol, low-hanging clouds, fire prevention logging, super sustainable farming and self-healing buildings. – **Source: The Guardian dated 28 December 2020.** <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/28/seabird-patrols-to-self-healing-buildings-the-15-conservation-stories-to-watch-in-2021>

CLIMATE AND THE ELECTRICITY SECTOR- The Columbia Law School recently published a report titled “Climate Risk in the Electricity Sector: Legal Obligations to Advance Climate Resilience Planning by Electric Utilities”- **Source: Sabin Centre for climate change – Columbia University Earth Institute dated 3 December 2020.** https://climate.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Full%20Report%20-%20Climate%20Risk%20in%20the%20Electricity%20Sector%20-%20Webb%20et%20al_0.pdf

REPORT BY RENEWABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INSTITUTE (RASEI) – The Renewable and Sustainable Energy Institute, University of Colorado Boulder published a report entitled: “Accelerating the U.S. Clean Energy Transformation: Challenges and Solutions by Sector”.

Source: University of Colorado Boulder dated 16 December 2020. https://www.colorado.edu/rasei/sites/default/files/attached-files/accelerating_the_us_clean_energy_transformation_final.2.pdf

NATIONAL

GENERAL

ESKOM OUTLINES ITS STREAMLINED APPROACH TO VERTICAL SEPARATION BY THE END OF 2021 - Eskom CEO, Andre De Ruyter outlined a streamlined approach to the vertical separation of the State-owned utility into three businesses of generation, distribution and transmission. He said this would help accelerate the establishment of an Eskom-owned independent transmission system and market operator (ITSMO) without the threat of any debt default. The restructuring would depend on securing external policy, regulatory and legal permissions. **Source: Polity dated 14 December 2020.** <https://www.polity.org.za/article/eskom-outlines-streamlined-restructuring-model-to-deliver-independent-grid-company-by-end-2021-2020-12-14>

CRIMINAL CHARGES PROCEED AGAINST ESKOM - The Department of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries (DEFF) confirmed that the National Prosecuting Authority will proceed with the criminal prosecution of Eskom for criminal violations of air pollution laws at its Kendal coal power station. According to reports by the media, the four criminal charges relate to violations of Eskom's air emissions permit limits for the power station, significant pollution of the environment and for providing false and/or misleading information to authorities. **Source: Centre for Environmental Rights dated 7 December 2020.** <https://cer.org.za/news/another-milestone-as-criminal-charges-proceed-against-coal-polluter-eskom>

GOVERNMENT TO OPPOSE COURT ACTION TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY OF HIGHVELD COMMUNITIES – The Government has notified the court and the litigants of its intention to oppose the court action known as the “deadly air” case. Vukani Environmental Movement and groundWork have instituted proceedings which seek for the court to declare that the poor air quality in the Highveld is a violation of rights to a safe environment. A plan was compiled in 2007 and was promulgated by the then Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism to “efficiently and effectively” maintain, monitor and enforce compliance with ambient air quality standards but, according to Vukani Environmental Movement and groundWork, this plan was not followed through. The Government has notified the court of their intention to oppose the application and have until January 29th to file its affidavit. **Source: The Star dated 15 December 2020.** <https://www.iol.co.za/the-star/news/state-opposes-court-action-forcing-it-to-improve-air-quality-of-highveld-communities-46b7d6a3-66a3-4188-9aa0-e1f504040328>

RENEWABLE ENERGY ADDS OVER A QUARTER OF PEAK POWER SUPPLY IN PEAK-TIME - Renewable energy procured from private generators as part of the Department of Energy's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPP), contributed more than a quarter of the peak-time electricity South Africans consumed during the first half of 2020. NERSA says that there has been an increase in renewable energy generation resulting in diversification of power generation and a decreased dependence on coal in the northern parts of the country. This could help reduce electricity losses associated with long-distance transmission. The use of renewable energy can be better utilised if storage capacity is increased. **Source: Moneyweb dated 8 December 2020.** <https://www.moneyweb.co.za/news/industry/renewable-energy-adds-over-a-quarter-of-peak-power-demand/>

CABINET APPROVES UPDATED NATIONAL PROTECTED AREAS EXPANSION STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THREATENED BIODIVERSITY – The National Biodiversity

Framework and the National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy are important for the protection of species and ecosystems. This 20-year strategy for the expansion of protected areas will guide South Africa to more effectively allocate human and financial resources for protected area expansion where it is most needed. The Revised National Biodiversity Framework has been approved for public comment and the updated National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy has been approved for implementation. **Source: South African Government News Agency dated 25 November 2020.** <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/cabinet-approves-measures-address-threatened-biodiversity>

CAPE TOWN WATER QUALITY – The Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (Outa) released results from a water sample taken from an “unofficial” discharge point at Potsdam on 18 November 2020 which showed extremely high levels of E.coli (8.4 million parts per 100ml). The accuracy of Outa’s result is being disputed by the Mayoral Committee (Mayco) of the City of Cape Town whose recent reading showed 108 parts per 100ml. The City’s Mayco member for water and waste, Xanthea Limberg, says Outa’s sample from 18 November 2020 was taken at a reed bed adjacent to the plant that had recently collapsed, which is not part of Potsdam operations. Outa’s senior legal project manager, Andrea Korff, says the Potsdam plant is a big source of water pollution which the City has failed to manage over the years. **Source Capetalk dated 9 December 2020.** <https://www.capetalk.co.za/articles/403745/big-stink-over-e-coli-levels-in-milnerton-lagoon-city-disputes-testing-results>

STANDARD BANK WILL CONTINUE FUNDING COAL MINING IN SOUTH AFRICA UNDER STRICT GUIDELINES – Over 80% of energy generation in South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa comes from coal fired power stations. Standard Bank will continue to fund thermal coal and coal-fired power generation operations provided strict measures are put in place for environmental sustainability and rehabilitation after mining activities. They believe that continuing with this funding is the responsible thing to do considering the importance of coal fired power stations to the overall power supply in South Africa. **Source Fin24 dated 10 December 2020.** <https://www.news24.com/fin24/companies/standard-bank-commits-to-funding-coal-mining-in-south-africa-and-region-20201210>

PUBLICATIONS

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOIL BIODIVERSITY – An article written by Dr Charlene Janion-Scheepers entitled “*Food and clean water start with soil biodiversity: Learning more about it is urgent*”. – **Source: Bizcommunity dated 10 December 2020.** <https://www.bizcommunity.africa/Article/410/642/211373.html>

CLIMATE GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA – *Assessment of the government’s ability and readiness to transform South Africa into a zero emissions society.* **Source: Climate Action Tracker Governance Series dated December 2020.** https://climateactiontracker.org/documents/837/2020_12_CAT_Governance_Report_South_Africa.pdf

CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

INVESTING IN MINING AFRICAN MINING VIRTUAL INDABA 2021: 1 – 4 February 2021.

GREENBIZ 2021: 9 – 11 February 2021.

ENVIRONMENTAL, CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY 17TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 24 – 26 February 2021.

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS SUMMIT 2021 – March 2021 (exact date to be confirmed)

AFRICA ENERGY INDABA (AEI) 13TH EDITION: 2 – 3 March 2021.

THE 26TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP26) TO THE UNFCCC: Postponed to 1-12 November 2021

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/>

IMBEWU's environmental note: Three ways to save our planet - <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/who-we-are/our-science/three-ways-to-save-our-planet/>

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