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SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2024

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<https://imbewu.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Monthly-SHE-leg-update-Aug2024.pdf>

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NATIONAL

PRESIDENT SIGNS THE ELECTRICITY REGULATION AMENDMENT ACT- On August 16, 2024, President Ramaphosa signed the Electricity Regulation Amendment Act (ERAA) into law, marking a significant step in modernising South Africa's electricity sector. The Act amends the Electricity Regulation Act 4 of 2006. It addresses current challenges and paves the way for a more competitive and efficient energy market. Key provisions include the establishment of an independent Transmission System Operator (TSO) within five years, with the National Transmission Company of South Africa serving as an interim TSO. This move is intended to ensure the reliability of the national grid while promoting greater competition in the electricity market. The ERA also empowers the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) to licence market activities and develop a Market Code to govern future competitive markets. NERSA will be responsible for setting prices, charges, and tariffs, ensuring that operators can recover their costs while earning a reasonable return on investment. The Act emphasizes fairness, mandating that the system operator treat all electricity generators and customers without discrimination. These provisions aim to create a level playing field, encouraging investment and innovation in the energy sector, particularly in renewable energy sources. Additionally, the Act introduces severe penalties for damaging or sabotaging electricity infrastructure, with fines of up to R5 million or imprisonment for up to ten years. These measures are part of a broader effort to protect public infrastructure and enhance energy security. Overall, the ERA is expected to lead to a more competitive and sustainable energy system, ultimately resulting in lower energy prices and long-term energy security for South Africans. The reforms align

with the goals of the Energy Action Plan and the Eskom Roadmap, which seek to end load shedding and support South Africa's transition to a more sustainable energy future.

Source: [Gov.za dated 16 August 2024](#)

ENERGY MINISTER URGES ENHANCED VIGILANCE AND AFFORDABLE INITIATIVES - Electricity Minister Ramokgopa provided an update on South Africa's energy situation, noting progress in addressing load reduction and advancing the Just Energy Transition. Despite improvements, challenges remain, particularly with load reduction, which affects many citizens, including those who consistently pay their bills. The Minister highlighted the significant debt owed to Eskom by municipalities (approximately R78 billion), which, in turn, are owed around R349 billion by various customers. To address these issues, the government is exploring innovative solutions, such as a pilot program with private sector collaboration to ensure municipal compliance with debt relief conditions. Minister Ramokgopa also emphasised South Africa's commitment to a Just Energy Transition, focusing on shifting to a low-carbon economy while ensuring fairness for all communities involved. The Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET IP) outlines the country's roadmap for achieving climate targets, requiring substantial domestic and international investment. An inter-ministerial committee has been established to oversee the JET IP's implementation, providing political leadership and addressing policy challenges. The Minister expressed optimism about the energy situation, expecting 2,500MW of generating capacity to be restored by the end of this month. He attributed this success to improved leadership, a dedicated workforce, and targeted interventions at key power stations. However, he cautioned that load shedding is not entirely behind us, with Eskom set to release its summer outlook soon, which will provide more insights into the energy prospects for the upcoming season.

Source: [Biz Community dated 12 August 2024](#)

SA ACHIEVES HALFWAY MILESTONE IN 30% CONSERVATION GOAL BY 2030 - South Africa has surpassed the halfway mark of its goal to conserve 30% of its terrestrial, inland water, and marine areas by 2030, as part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Currently, 16.75% of the country's land and marine areas are protected, covering 20.4 million hectares. Despite this progress, challenges persist in managing these protected areas, including issues such as human-wildlife conflict, invasive species, poaching, and the impacts of climate change. The National Protected Area Expansion Strategy aims to systematically increase conservation areas by 0.5% annually, with a long-term goal of conserving 36% of the country's biomes by 2036. To achieve the 30x30 target, South Africa needs to add 16 million more hectares to its conservation estate, equating to 2.2 million hectares per year until 2030. Much of this expansion is being achieved through the biodiversity stewardship program, which involves agreements with private and communal landowners to protect and manage priority biodiversity areas. Community involvement is emphasised as crucial to both expanding and effectively managing these conservation areas, ensuring that local populations benefit economically from tourism and co-manage the biodiversity resources. The marine environment also faces significant challenges, with a need to increase protected marine areas from 5.4% to 30% by 2030, requiring an annual increase of 4.38%. This process involves careful scientific data collection and extensive stakeholder consultations, which can delay the proclamation of new marine protected areas. Funding constraints and pressures from agriculture, invasive species, and development continue to pose challenges to the effective management and expansion of South Africa's protected areas.

Source: [Daily Maverick dated 30 July 2024](#)

INTERNATIONAL

DROUGHT RAVAGES SOUTHERN AFRICA'S AGRICULTURE: CAUSES AND LESSONS - Southern Africa is experiencing its worst drought in years, devastating maize crops across the region and destabilizing food security in countries like South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and others. The drought, driven by the 2023 El Niño phenomenon, has led to 68 million people in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) needing urgent food aid. Despite early warnings, governments failed to take adequate preparatory measures, leaving millions at risk of hunger. Malawi, heavily reliant on rain-fed maize, has been particularly hard hit, highlighting the need for investment in irrigation systems to reduce dependency on rainfall. Additionally, export restrictions on maize in some countries, like Zimbabwe, have worsened the situation by discouraging future production and harming local economies. The drought has also impacted

Lake Kariba, leading to reduced water levels, declining fish catches, and increased poaching as livelihoods are threatened. To address these challenges, experts suggest that Southern Africa must diversify its agriculture beyond maize, wheat, and rice, by promoting the cultivation of drought-resistant crops like sorghum, millet, and indigenous vegetables. This shift would improve food security and resilience against future climate shocks.

[Source: The Conversation dated 21 August 2024](#)

STUDY REVEALS LAND ACTIVITIES THREATENING GREAT BARRIER REEF WATER QUALITY - A major scientific study involving over 200 experts found that land-based activities and climate change have significantly worsened water quality in Australia's Great Barrier Reef. The study, funded by the Australian government, revealed that poor land management practices, such as vegetation degradation, increased erosion, and the expansion of fertilized lands and urban centres, have led to higher pollution levels. Specifically, pollutant loads of fine sediments and dissolved inorganic nitrogen have increased by 1.4-5 times and 1.5-3 times, respectively, compared to pre-development levels. The degraded water quality, particularly from fine sediments, nutrients, and pesticides, is negatively impacting the reef's ecosystems, especially in freshwater, estuarine, coastal, and inshore marine areas. While climate change remains the primary threat to the reef, poor water quality hampers its recovery from events like mass bleaching. The study emphasizes the urgent need for cost-effective land management practices to improve water quality within the next decade, and calls for increased collaboration among landholders, Indigenous communities, policymakers, and scientists to implement locally effective solutions. In response to these findings, the Australian government has allocated A\$28.5 million to support coastal habitats around the reef, funding 18 projects focused on rehabilitating blue carbon ecosystems such as seagrasses, mangroves, salt marshes, and wetlands. Improved water quality management, alongside carbon emissions reductions, is seen as crucial for enhancing the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef in the face of climate change.

[Source: Carbon Pulse dated 1 August 2024](#)

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For more information contact admin@imbewu.co.za or visit <https://imbewu.co.za/she-electronic-legal-registers/>

18 September 2024- World Water Monitoring Day <https://www.dws.gov.za/Projects/WorldWaterMonitoringDay/default.aspx>

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