



# GOVERNMENT DIALOGUE

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

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## Power to people facing adversity

When South Africans stand together, we are able to overcome the odds. It is a characteristic that has long defined us as a nation. We demonstrated this tenacity when we successfully hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

The hosting of the event demonstrated our capabilities to the world and earned us the reputation of a country that can deliver.

Our national power supply remains under pressure as Eskom is at times unable to produce the full electricity required due to maintenance and unexpected breakdowns at power stations.

In this instance it becomes necessary to interrupt supply to certain areas through load shedding.

Our demand for electricity has reached the point where at least Level 1 load shedding, a point which requires that 1 000 MW be removed from the grid and sometimes Level 2, which is equal to 2 000 MW, are necessary.

Government apologises for the inconvenience caused as a result of the unplanned electricity disruptions and remains deeply concerned over the effect it has had on the lives of South Africans. Its impact on business is equally concerning as our economy is dependent on electricity for economic growth.

Government is working to secure South Africa's future energy

supply through an energy mix which comprises coal, solar, wind, hydro, gas and nuclear energy.

In the meantime, let us assist the country by trying to work around load shedding. We should take time to familiarise ourselves with the schedule in our areas.

This way we are able to plan ahead so that the power disruptions have less of an impact on our family life and businesses. Households and businesses are encouraged to make provision for the fact that there will be at least two-hour power outages between 7am and 10pm daily.

Be aware of the national energy alerts on radio and television, and immediately respond to them by switching off high-energy appliances such as geysers, pool pumps, ovens and air conditioners so that we pass the critical period with limited disruptions.

The energy situation going forward remains extremely tight. But let's bear in mind, we are all in this situation together and need to do everything possible to get through this short-term strain.

Government is confident that its analysis of the situation and the



measures it is introducing will bring relief in the foreseeable future.

We are supporting the national grid through the more frequent use of diesel powered open-cycle gas turbines to help bridge the



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immediate gap between supply and demand.

Work is under way to reduce maintenance backlogs and improve the performance of power plants to reduce unplanned outages; these are a major concern.

There are also plans in place to restore 960 MW of generation capacity at Majuba Power Station by the end of the year, after one of its storage silos collapsed last year.

These immediate interventions are receiving our highest priority through the War Room established by Cabinet to fast-track the implementation of a five-point plan to turn the current situation around.

The War Room is led by Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, who is supported by an Inter-Ministerial War Room comprising of relevant Ministers and is supported by a Technical War Room of Directors-General.

Our energy crunch is a result of a number of complex factors. It includes the legacy of apartheid, where millions of marginalised black South Africans were deliberately



excluded from the national grid.

Over the last 20 years, electricity has been provided to more than 5.8 million households, reducing the percentage of households without electricity from about 50 per cent in 1994 to 14 per cent.

Over the medium-term, the government is working to secure the national grid by buying an additional 1000 MW from private power producers, which will come on stream within 18 months.

The launch of an independent power producer programme that harnesses waste energy from the sugar, paper, and pulp industries to produce about 800 MW is part of the department's plans.

A number of potential gas-to-power projects have also been identified to alleviate our energy supply constraints. These

include both new gas-fired power stations and conversion of diesel-fired power stations to gas.

Our energy situation affects all of us. In the interest of the nation, we need to work together to solve our collective problem in the spirit and manner in which we rose to the challenge of 2010.

Like in our preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, failure is simply not an option. We can and will overcome this tight energy situation when we stand together.

*\* Lynne Brown is the Minister of Public Enterprises*

