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Media Release

Climate Change Just Transition Framework consultation session

The Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) invited members and stakeholders of the [National Science and Technology Forum](#) (NSTF) to comment and submit feedback on the draft [Just Transition Framework](#) for South Africa. The objective of the discussion was to hear from the PCC about the Framework they had drafted and give feedback on it. The discussion explored the possibilities inherent within the Just Transition Framework (JTF) and the opportunities that lie ahead for the country, the continent, and the world. This is the time to inhibit the impact of global warming and to change the future of the planet and, through discussions like this, steps can be taken, and plans made to achieve this goal.

The discussion hosted by the NSTF asked that members of the [NSTF Executive Committee](#) (Exco) frame their own insights and queries around the '[Framework for a Just Transition in South Africa](#)'. One of the key strategic objectives of the NSTF is to influence and catalyse quality delivery of science, engineering and technology (SET) and innovation policies. This consultative workshop was one such high-level event designed to provide constructive interaction and discussion with government and stakeholders on the issue of a just energy transition. The discussion that took place on 8 April 2022 brought a broad range of stakeholders together across public and private sectors to exchange knowledge and ideas.

The NSTF provides neutral collaborative platforms where issues and sectors meet

- Feedback from these [discussion forums](#) is given to role players and stakeholders.
- Recommendations are put forward to government as part of the [SET community](#)'s (science, engineering and technology) efforts to make input into policies and implementation.
- The NSTF [represents over 120](#) member organisations participating as key stakeholders of the SET and innovation community.
- These discussion forums allow for engagement, interaction and cooperation in a quadruple helix framework (higher education-business-government-civil-society).

Unpacking the problem

Dr Mpho Lekgoathi, Vice-chair of the NSTF and **Dr Crispian Olver**, Executive Director of the PCC, [opened the discussion](#) by highlighting its importance in the local and global context and setting the expectations of the event. The goal – to find ways for South Africa to transition to a better future for the country and the planet and not to leave anyone behind during the transition. As Lekgoathi said, there needs to be an extreme acceleration of transition towards a low-carbon or low-emission climate-friendly economy to benefit

human health and a sustainable environment while ensuring quality jobs and economic prosperity. To achieve this, knowledge is a key factor, and it is important to imagine new possibilities and how the JTF can take the planet and its people in the right direction. Oliver reinforced this message before unpacking the history of the commission. It emerged from the Presidential Jobs Summit 2018 and was established just over a year ago in 2021 to focus on climate change and skills development in South Africa. The objective of the commission is to look at how the climate transition will impact employment in the country and to undertake a dual mandate of advising government and social partners how to navigate this transition based on the best available science and to form deep and enduring links with the science community.

Understanding the Just Transition Framework

Dr Brian Mantlana, of the CSIR and a PCC Commissioner, opened the conversation around the PCC Report '[Laying the foundation for a Just Transition Framework for South Africa](#)', and the draft '[Framework for a Just Transition in South Africa](#)', and underscored the importance of the input of the scientific community in his [presentation of the Just Transition Framework](#). For Mantlana, the depth of knowledge and insights held by the scientific community are invaluable in taking the Framework forward. He explained how the PCC commissioners were appointed; the multi-stakeholder approach across government, labour, business, research and academic institutions; and the PCC's commitment to work with core stakeholders in designing, developing and facilitating the JTF.

As Mantlana pointed out, it is a massive undertaking that requires collaboration across multiple sectors and partners to ensure it is adopted as a guide for everyone moving forward. Currently, the document is not a detailed implementation plan but unpacks the key considerations, risk groups, policy measures and vision that need to be considered when defining the notion of Just Transition and what it means for the country. He also highlighted the risks, the justice considerations, the terminology and the focus areas that need to be addressed throughout the discussions and the final implementation of the Just Transition Framework.

Lead responses from NSTF constituencies

Prof Norman Maiwashe, General Manager: Agricultural Research Council (ARC) represents the '[NSTF Science Councils and Statutory Bodies Sector](#)' on the NSTF Exco; **Mr Sibongiseni**

Ndimande, Director: Research Policy and Analysis, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) represents the Government sector together with a Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) representative; and

Mr Johan Maartens from the Society for Automation, Instrumentation, Mechatronics and Control (SAIMC) represents Professional Bodies ([proSET](#)) on the Exco, and in this NSTF constituency discussion.

The National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) is:

- [Independent non-profit stakeholder body](#) and network – a civil-society forum
- [Unified voice to government](#) for the science, engineering, technology (SET) and innovation community
- Includes [private and public sectors](#)
- Promotes SET and innovation in South Africa since 1995

Maiwashe responded to the JTF by outlining his view of the objectives in terms of

pathways to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy and the technology development value chains that will be involved. He believes that the Framework is balanced and well detailed with issues fully addressed, although he added that sectoral analysis would have been useful. He further mentioned that high level policy direction towards clean energy and sustainable food systems would provide guidance for policy advocacy measures for Statutory Bodies. He said that the importance of monitoring and evaluation had been properly emphasised in the Framework. For Maiwashe, it was also important to strengthen research and development (R&D) in terms of infrastructure and expertise prioritisation as this is the best option for resilience. Finally, he underscored the value of sourcing new funding across both the public and private sectors.

Ndimande opened his analysis of the '[Just Transition Framework](#)' by highlighting how invaluable it is to be included in this engagement and to connect and collaborate with thought leaders and scientific thinkers in resolving challenges facing the country. He talked about the issues in under-developed rural areas, the need to provide skills development and to fully realise the potential of unskilled labour, and to consistently articulate the issues of climate change and how they will impact the country. He believes it is important to enhance the country's agricultural sector and to minimise reliance on imports to embed food security and drive local economy. South Africa needs to become self-sufficient in meeting food demand and to take active steps towards reducing unemployment through the actions of this sector. He also mentioned green bonds and blue bonds as financial instruments in driving sustainable climate change actions and bringing in new money to the economy. His presentation focused on de-carbonising the economy, skills development, renewable energy, achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the value of bringing equality, financial growth and success to the Framework.

Maartens then spoke on his '[Response to the Just Transition Framework](#)', starting with a look at the importance of de-carbonisation. He explained that it is important to be careful of what the Just Transition Framework will do to the rest of the economy, and to educate the youth as the transition involves new technologies and approaches. This will open up new jobs and opportunities for the youth with technologies that rely on skilled expertise to manage, implement and maintain but this also requires that existing training equipment be updated to ensure that young people are trained properly on the latest technology. As the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the transition to green energy are happening at the same time, it makes sense to train young people in jobs that will be relevant and help the country move in the right direction.

The future unpacked

In an in-depth panel discussion led by Niehaus, the audience and presenters explored the implications of the presentation of the JTF. The discussion covered strategy, skills development, consequences and expectations, making it well worth listening to [here](#).

[Closing remarks to wrap up the discussion of the consultations](#) session were done by Mr Dhesigen Naidoo, Climate Adaptation Lead to the South African Presidential Climate Commission.

The speakers or the spokesperson, [Ms Jansie Niehaus](#), Executive Director of the NSTF, can be contacted through media@nstf.org.za. Further information can be found on the [NSTF website](#) and the [NSTF YouTube channel](#).

Read about previous NSTF Discussion Forums and articles on related topics:

- [Loadshedding and power cuts – what is really going on?](#)
- [Water-Energy-Food Nexus – towards efficient national planning](#)
- [Sustainable Energy for All in South Africa](#)
- [Advanced manufacturing and automation: potential and challenges](#)

- [Evidence for Climate Change](#) , with Prof Bob Scholes
- [The acclaimed climate scientist, the climate crisis and the crystal ball](#)
- [Climate and other changes, a message from the NSTF Executive Director](#)
- [Energy and other power crises](#)

About the NSTF

The National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF), established in 1995, is a broadly-representative stakeholder body for all science, engineering and technology (SET) and innovation organisations in South Africa, which seeks to influence policy formulation and delivery.

The NSTF Awards are unique in SA, recognising the outstanding contributions of individuals, teams and organisations to SET and innovation.

The science bursaries page provides information on bursaries and bursary providers for science, engineering and related studies.

STEMulator.org attracts learners and students to the exciting world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). It provides a virtual world full of stimulating content to excite and inform the youth, including STEM career guidance. Established under the auspices of the NSTF proSET membership sector (Professionals in *science, engineering and technology*).

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