

Energy security top of mind ahead of Budget Speech

By [Hloniphizwe Molo](#)

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The president, in presenting the State of the Nation Address, listed a range of priorities for the country. The minister of finance, Enoch Godongwana, is expected to soon present how funding will be allocated to achieve these priorities during the country's Budget Speech.



Hloniphizwe Molo, country chair, Shell Companies SA

It cannot be disputed that energy security is high on the country's agenda. Power insecurity poses a huge risk to our country's economy. This concern was evident recently when we witnessed robust engagements at both Mining Indaba and the Solar Power Africa Conference. All businesses and society at large are experiencing disruption and are impacted by the current load shedding.

There's no doubt that the transformation of the energy sector and how it will support the improved quality of life, job creation, and sustainable livelihoods, is top of mind for all South Africans. Indeed, this issue is also of interest to investors and the international community more generally.

By the same token, tourists also wonder what a visit to South Africa would mean, particularly in terms of hours where they will not have access to stable power supply which impact their connectivity to the world.

Holistic approach to achieving energy security

As a global corporate citizen, we have seen many countries walk the path upon which South Africa has now embarked. We fully understand the importance of an integrated and holistic approach to building energy security. We are clear of the need to produce the energy of today while we journey into the future as we make the 'just energy transition' a reality.

While we are still viewed as an organisation in the oil sector, we believe that some of the lessons we have learnt in building consensus around how to do things differently in a changing global context, focusing specifically on energy solutions, will come in handy as South Africa aims to build energy security.



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17 Feb 2023



Threat to business continuity

As a sector, we have also experienced business disruption and continue to receive concerns from our own stakeholders due to load shedding. Business continuity is threatened, and many other sectors are experiencing the same. Ordinary South Africans see the quality of lives they have lived disintegrate in front of them and they worry about the future of their children.

Listening to current affairs shows, and just being privy to conversations between people, tells me that the reality in South Africa is not too far off from our experiences. While not to be over simplistic, these concerns can be addressed with consistent action and cohesion between what is said and done.

The president has expressed an appreciation of what needs to be done in South Africa. The same can be said of Eskom and other critical stakeholders.

Taking action

What needs to be done now is to begin to implement some of the more easily implementable actions so that citizens can begin to see a difference in their daily lives. This needs to be done with speed while the harder work is in progress to create sustainable energy security that benefits people, and the planet equally, as part of a just energy transition.

We must also remember that a just energy transition towards energy security requires funding and resources. South Africa has been doing good work in this space and has managed to acquire some international funding.

However, as corporates in the country, we can also actively participate and be supportive of South Africa's efforts to address its energy issues. And ultimately, it will be win-win solutions because better energy security means better business continuity for all of us. It also means continued employment and the stability of the SMME sector, which is critical as we continue to build the economy of our country.



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Achieving success together

While we look forward to what the minister of finance will say at his Budget Speech, we want to assure government that, as Shell, we are ready to power progress and work together to address this very important issue of energy security.

I am confident that we will go through this season. The pandemic showed us how we can achieve collective, mutually beneficial solutions. Together with our lessons working in communities across the world, and what was achieved during the pandemic, we know that by working together, success can be achieved.

And ultimately, the citizens of our nation, and its children, become the biggest beneficiaries. Energy security must be achieved in South Africa, and I know that we can do it together.

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