

# **SOUTH AFRICA'S GREEN ECONOMY PROJECT**

## **PRESENTATION TO A UNEP PANEL DISCUSSION ON MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**21 JULY 2015**



**international relations  
& cooperation**

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# INTRODUCTION

- South Africa has long considered the green economy as one of the key tools towards transitioning to a low-carbon, resource efficient and sustainable economy with a potential to create jobs across many sectors of the economy.
- The country's green economy policy commitments and action plan dates as far back as the 2009 framework response to the international economic crisis. Strategy emphasised development of incentives for investment in programmes geared at creating large number of 'green jobs'.
- The framework necessitated a multi-stakeholder consultative engagement, thus the May 2010 national green economy summit that brought in all sectors of society and was addressed by the President.

## INTRODUCTION (Cont)

- Through the Green Economy strategy (2010) that came out of the consultations, South Africa identified the following eight pillars for intervention: **green building and the built environment; sustainable transport and infrastructure; clean energy and energy efficiency; resource conservation and management; sustainable waste management and practices; agriculture, food production and forestry; water management; sustainable consumption and production.**
- South Africa also follows a systems approach to sustainability, where the economic system, the socio-political system and the ecosystem are embedded within each other, and then integrated through the governance system that holds all the other systems together in a legitimate regulatory framework to ensure a balance between the **Economic, Social and Environment pillars** of sustainable development.
- The country's approach also recognises the horizontal and vertical roles across sector departments, national, provincial and local governments. As a result of such decentralised roles, to complement the national policies, various provinces and local governments are required to develop their green economy plans that outline their specific action priorities within their local strength settings.

## INTRODUCTION (Cont.)

- South Africa's green economy vision is also outlined in a number of policy documents, including; the New Growth Path (2010), the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Action Plan, (2011) the National Development Plan (2012) and the National Climate Change Response Policy (2011). These policy instruments outline green economy as one of the key focus priority areas.
- The National Development Plan as a blue print policy envisions that by 2030, South Africa's transition to an environmentally sustainable, climate-change resilient, low-carbon economy and just society will be well established.
- According to the National Development Plan, South Africa faces urgent developmental challenges in terms of poverty, unemployment and inequality, and will need to find ways to "decouple" the economy from the environment, to break the links between economic activity, environmental degradation and carbon-intensive energy consumption.
- 1.1 billion Rands was allocated by the National Treasury through the establishment of the national green fund in 2012 to provide practical implementation support for the transition to a green economy. To date, the fund is supporting 31 investment projects, 16 research projects and 8 capacity building projects. Key to the model of the national green fund is its support for among others, the use of Public-Private-Partnership wherever possible in supporting the various projects.

## OVERVIEW OF SOME KEY PROGRAMMES

We have made great strides in the implementation of the eight pillars.

### Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer programme

- Our Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer programme presents a significant opportunity to reduce the carbon intensity of South Africa's electricity provision and has considerable potential to hasten the transition to a lower carbon economy.
- To date, a total of 64 projects have been awarded to the private sector, and the first projects are already on line. Private sector investment totaling US\$14 billion has been committed, and these projects will generate 3922 megawatt (MW) of renewable power.

### The National Cleaner Production Center

- Through the National Cleaner Production center, **South Africa promotes industrial efficiency with notable savings from the current energy efficiency project.** Since 2010, this programme has resulted in energy savings of **571 Gigawatt-hours (GWh)** which when converted to current energy prices, translates to a financial saving of some R 344 million (ZAR).

# OVERVIEW OF SOME KEY PROGRAMMES

## Sustainable transport system

- We have made a leap towards the attainment of sustainable transport system through the development and systematic integrated public transport system such as the Gautrain and the Bus Rapid System (BRT).
- This integrated approach considered the inter-relationship between transport, the environment, the economy and society as a whole.
- Carbon emissions from Gautrain are considerably lower per passenger transported, than for that of private vehicles, notwithstanding the higher speeds and even when there are no major traffic incidents.

# OVERVIEW OF SOME KEY PROGRAMMES

## Natural resource management

- In the natural resource management sphere, we have contributed to over four hundred thousand (412,559) work opportunities and hundred and thirty thousand (130,038) full-time equivalents through various initiatives implemented through the Working for Water, Working for Wetlands, Working on Fire and Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programme.
- The programmes target individuals from previously disadvantaged background with focus on women (55%), youth (60%) and people living with disabilities (2%).
- A great deal of impact is being realized with respect to waste management where an increase in collection and recycling of over 8 million kilograms of waste has been achieved through demonstration projects. Over 30 000 hectares of conservation area has been protected and with landowners becoming keenly involved, this figure is expected to increase by orders of magnitude.
- Green skills training opportunities are already being realized in most of the projects with at least 6 300 individuals having been directly trained as a result of Green Fund projects. Green skills training is expected to increase substantially through replication and scale-up of the portfolio.



## LESSONS FOR OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

- There is no one size fits all when it comes to the approach to green economy action in the context of sustainable development and that the responses are tailored in line with the country's context and priorities.
- Multi-stakeholder consultative process can produce the most suitable approach and engender buy-in from all stakeholders.
- High-level political commitment useful, to be accompanied by relevant policy instruments and financial mechanisms to allow implementation.
- Private Sector players are willing to invest in green projects and partner with the State if the policy is clear.
- International Partners (donors, DFIs, Intergovernmental Organisations) are inclined to help with green programmes and their assistance can fill a variety of gaps i.e. internal capacity to design and manage programmes, green economy monitoring frameworks, partial risk guarantees etc.



## LESSONS FOR OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

- Make a convincing case for green projects - In some countries a convincing case needs to be made repeatedly to justify procurement of renewable energy.
- The sharing of experiences and best practices is important and can assist improve green economy deliverables.



## CONTRIBUTION TO ACHIEVEMENT OF SDGS

- The South African Approach will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, for example.
  - All the eight pillars for intervention are part of the SDGs: green building and the built environment; sustainable transport and infrastructure; clean energy and energy efficiency; resource conservation and management; sustainable waste management and practices; agriculture, food production and forestry; water management; sustainable consumption and production. The strategy is to ensure a balance between the Economic, Social and Environment pillars of sustainable development.
  - Strategy emphasises development of incentives for investment in programmes geared at creating large number of 'green jobs' ( **Goal 1- End Poverty in all forms everywhere and Goal 10- Reduce Inequality within and among countries**)
  - The focus on *green building and the built environment* fulfils **Goal 11- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.**
  - The focus on Agriculture fulfils **Goal 2- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.**
  - The focus on water management to fulfil **Goal 6- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.**

## CONTRIBUTION TO ACHIEVEMENT OF SDGS

- In line with the G77 + China position, South Africa envisages a declaration that will set a tone for an ambitious and transformative and action-oriented sustainable development agenda that is guided by the Rio principles - in particular the Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities.
- In this regard the declaration must recognise the criticality of balancing the universality of the agenda with differentiation, to acknowledge the different responsibilities, capacities and circumstances among countries that continue to pose challenges for the realisation of development aspirations by the developing countries.
- The declaration should emphasize the importance of territorial integrity, sovereignty and policy space to allow member states to adapt the Sustainable Development Goals and targets to national development plans and strategies. Keeping this principle in mind, the UN System can still help with sustainable development programmes and their assistance can fill a variety of gaps i.e. internal capacity to design and manage programmes, green economy monitoring frameworks, facilitating partial risk guarantees etc.
- The General Assembly has been responsive to the mandates coming from the Rio+20 Conference. The General Assembly provided the international community with an opportunity to craft an agenda and strengthen institutions for global sustainable development beyond 2015. Member States not only elaborated the SDGs in an open, transparent and participative process, but also endorsed the report of the Open Working Groups as the main basis for the Post-2015 Development Agenda.



## CLOSING REMARKS

- Participation in this UNEP project contributes as one of the mechanisms for South Africa to reflect on its green economy approach since 2009.
- It has also provided an opportunity to learn from not only Bolivia, China and Thailand, but also from other countries such as Peru on the forest sector and South Korea on green investment and resource efficiency, as part of the wider Global Green Growth Institute partnership experiences.
- South Africa supports the report findings for more work to be done in support of the development of capacity on green economy monitoring frameworks.
- South Africa looks to continue with such engagements as we progress towards the transition to a green economy as articulated in the National Development Plan.

# END

# THANK YOU



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