



Press Release (draft)
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Green New Deal can stimulate economic recovery and create jobs

While lockdown inadvertently helped to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, it is critically important that sustainability of the environment is at the heart of post-Covid-19 recovery efforts. This is according to the South African National Energy Development Institute, (SANEDI).

“This is where the much-talked about Green New Deal (GND) becomes crucial and while it’s no panacea to economic challenges, harnessing its benefits can help grow the economy and create jobs in a post-Covid-19 world,” says Barry Bredenkamp, General Manager Energy Efficiency and Corporate Communications at SANEDI.

The GND is a major globally-led government programme aimed at shaping socially and economically just, green and renewable energy-powered economies, with societies supporting human rights, while addressing poverty and inequality. There have been forecasts by unions, like the Congress of South African Trade Unions, for example, supportive of the idea that it could make a difference, creating at least 300 000 jobs – yet this has not happened. But post the pandemic, it provides an ideal platform to help stimulate the economy.

SANEDI is not alone in proposing such steps and is proud to endorse a call by what is being hailed as the largest ever UN-backed CEO-led climate advocacy effort in which 155 multinationals have reaffirmed a science-based commitment to achieving a zero carbon economy and urging governments to match their ambition to “prioritize a faster and fairer transition from a grey to a green economy”.

As South Africa eases towards a return to business, recovery must be premised on ensuring that the environment is key to a sustainable future. “Rebuilding initiatives premised on ensuring that the environment is key to a better future, can assist in addressing the effects of Covid-19, along with tackling poverty and job creation through a number of initiatives,” says Bredenkamp.

To this end, SANEDI supports several measures which could revitalise the post-Covid-19 Green New Deal initiative, these include:

- Putting climate change projects at the heart of recovery efforts
- Facilitating funding in green projects, supporting poverty alleviation and job creation
- Focusing on sustainable energy innovation for impact in urban and rural South Africa
- Advocating for green energy solutions that lessen reliance on finite fossil fuels, for example, and,
- Scaling up successful small endeavors, which, along with the above proposals, in turn can help grow the economy and create jobs.

The platform, he says, is already available as South Africa is no stranger to the principles of a GND with elements of it featuring in the National Growth Plan, while the Green Fund established in 2012 through the Department of Environmental Affairs with an initial R800 million seed fund, is managed by the Development Bank of Southern Africa, (DBSA).

The call to bring about equal distribution of income and reverse decades of environmental degradation is not unique to South Africa. In 2019, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) published its trade and development report calling for decarbonizing the global economy, arguing that it would require a significant rise in public investment, especially in clean transport, energy and food systems.

According to SANEDI, integration of actions are key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals on climate change, in particular meeting the targets of the National Development Plan (NDP), whose vision is by 2030 for the country to become fully engaged in the transition towards an environmentally sustainable, climate-change resilient, low-carbon economy and a just society.

Putting this into numbers, the goals in the NDP seeks to achieve a reduction of the country's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions below a baseline of 34% by 2020 and 42% by 2030. The reduction of GHG emissions can be achieved by reducing our overall reliance on coal-based energy generation, to increasing and accelerating the uptake of energy efficiency and renewable sources – a transition that could potentially create 300,000 green jobs, through infrastructure development and enabling new opportunities, especially for the poor.

“It is clear, South Africa can benefit in a post-Covid-19 scenario, by harnessing the positives of a Green New Deal and making it work towards shaping a stronger economy and creating jobs,” concludes Bredenkamp.

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For enquiries contact:

About SANEDI

The South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI), is a Schedule 3A, State Owned Company, established by the Government to direct, monitor and conduct applied energy research to develop innovative, integrated solutions to catalyse growth and prosperity in the green economy. It drives scientific evidence-driven ventures that contribute to youth empowerment, gender equity, environmental sustainability, and the 4th Industrial Revolution, within the National Development

Plan (NDP), through consultative, sustainable energy projects. For more information, go to www.sanedi.org.za.