

# **SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH COMMENTS ON THE CLIMATE CHANGE BILL, 2022**

We, the youth, applaud and support strides made by the South African Government with regards to climate change, and would like to align ourselves with the comments expressed by the rest of the South African Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) constituency on the Climate Change Bill. We stress the need for a just transition to an inclusive, sustainable economy that would aid development, allow us to be global competitors and enhance the livelihood of people living in South Africa.

Cognisant of the urgency for climate action and the role of the South African Climate Change Bill in realising our climate goals, we would like to make the following comments:

A month ago, floods in KwaZulu-Natal killed 489 people, destroyed 4 000 houses, and displaced about 40 000 residents. This should be a wakeup call and reminder that urgent action is required to address the climate crisis in South Africa.

We would like to commend the recognition and emphasis on the potential for climate change impacts to undermine development goals of South Africa and the need for a just transition to a climate change resilient and equitable society.

We would further like to urge the government to continue to emphasise the integration of economic and social development and employment objectives in the environmental strategies to come from this Bill.

However, we note that the Preamble briefly mentions the Paris Agreement and other international climate agreements South Africa is a signatory to and fails to acknowledge national policies and/or agreements such as South Africa's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the National Development Plan (NDP). The fear is that the implication of this is that the Bill will fail to align with national and international policies.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **POLICY ALIGNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **The Presidential Climate Commission Appointment Process**

We applaud the establishment of the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) and see the Commission as an important vehicle in driving the just transition in South Africa. We commend how, since its establishment, the PCC has been engaged with various

constituencies to inform the work of the PCC and has developed a workable Just Transition Framework.

We do want to highlight that the appointment process and terms of the commissioners needs to be made transparent. There needs to be a public consultative process to the appointment of the commissioners to ensure that we have the best representation and the best skilled people representing various constituencies in the Commission.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND REMOVALS**

#### National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trajectory

We believe that determining a national greenhouse gas emission trajectory for the country is an important starting point in monitoring and regulating greenhouse gas emissions but is also an important exercise in assessing how well interventions to manage and reduce greenhouse gas emissions are going. As such, we believe that a deadline is appropriate for this activity. We propose that the minister must determine a national greenhouse gas emission trajectory for South Africa within 5 years of the operation of the Act.

#### Listed Greenhouse Gases and Activities

Identifying and listing the greenhouse gas emissions that are likely to exacerbate climate change in South Africa is an important activity in inspiring urgent action. It is important for the list to be made accessible for all. We also believe that most of the science is already known as to which greenhouse gases are likely to exacerbate climate change in South Africa. As such, we urge the government to identify and publish a list of the greenhouse gases within 2 years of the operation of the Act to ensure its effective and expeditious implementation.

#### Carbon Budgets

We welcome the allocation of adequate carbon budgeting to limit greenhouse gas emissions, however we believe that paragraph 24.1 should be more inclusive of the real big polluters. We propose that the paragraph reads as follows:

“The Minister must allocate a carbon budget to any person, business, organisation, and any other big polluting entity that conducts an activity listed in terms of section 23(2).”

We would also like to appeal to the government to include information on when carbon budgeting will come into effect. We urge the government to consider carbon budgeting to

come into effect within a year of the operation of this Act. Furthermore, reports on the progress made by any person, business, organisation, and any other big polluting entity should be published to ensure transparency and that polluters are meeting the targets set out.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **GENERAL MATTERS AND TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

#### Public Participation:

We urge the government to consider other avenues to inform the public about public participation processes underway. We would like to propose that information about various public participation processes be shared at least in 1 national newspaper, 1 national radio station, and broadcasted on the SABC news channel to reach a wider range of constituencies from different backgrounds, demographics, and resources.

*The comments to the South African Youth Comments on the Climate Change Bill, 2022 was created members of the Youth Policy Committee (YPC). The YPC is a convening group that brings together youth organisations and young individuals to understand, comment and participate in policy processes that affect young people. The comments were submitted to the Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Parliament on 27 May 2022. For any queries, please do not hesitate to email [youth@saiia.org.za](mailto:youth@saiia.org.za).*

