

POST-EVENT HIGH LEVEL OUTCOMES REPORT

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NBI's Inaugural South Africa Climate Summit Delivers Clear Implementation Agenda, Unlocks Renewed Momentum for Climate Action

28 November 2025, Johannesburg — The inaugural South Africa Climate Summit, convened by the National Business Initiative (NBI), held from 24-25 November in Johannesburg, concluded with resounding success, generating concrete commitments, cross-sector collaboration mechanisms and a clear signal to accelerate implementation of South Africa's climate and just transition priorities.

Building on the Summit's founding purpose, to translate ambition into measurable action and support delivery of South Africa's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets, the event brought together leaders across business, government, finance, labour, civil society, youth, academia and municipalities as well as foreign dignitaries from the UK, Netherlands and Germany.

Across 28 events over two days, stakeholders demonstrated the depth of commitment to build a resilient, competitive and inclusive green economy.

The Summit's outcomes strongly reinforce South Africa's global positioning following COP30, a successful G20 Presidency and the B20's call for deeper business–government collaboration, accelerated investment and fair economic development. Collectively, these signals place South African business at the forefront of driving practical climate solutions at home.

Business and government alignment: From ambition to impact

The Summit underscored the role of public-private leadership in driving implementation:

Opening plenary highlights

- South Africa is positioned exceptionally well to take advantage of renewable energy and its associated value chain, given the country's world-class solar and wind resource base.
- Climate leadership is a global expectation and a local imperative, following South Africa's strong showing at G20 and COP30.
- Africa's minerals and markets are indispensable to global growth, the demands of digitisation and AI, and net zero pathways.
- Business must ensure implementation leads to real impact, benefits to and the inclusion of society, or the credibility of climate initiatives will weaken.
- South Africa must frame its climate action within its current economic reality. Climate action can stimulate new industries and jobs, lower energy costs for vulnerable households, and open more inclusive local economic opportunities, helping to tackle unemployment, poverty, and inequality together.

Municipal empowerment and public-private partnerships emerge as cornerstones of adaptation

A central theme throughout the Summit was the pivotal role municipalities must play as the frontline of climate adaptation and resilience. Insights echoed recent reporting that municipal empowerment

and strong public-private partnerships (PPPs) are now recognised nationally as key drivers of climate adaptation.

Government and business agreed on the need to:

- Strengthen municipal technical capacity, especially in climate planning and infrastructure readiness.
- Embed climate resilience into Integrated Development Plans (IDP), disaster-risk reduction, water security and energy-transition initiatives.
- Scale PPPs that unlock investment into water infrastructure, storm-water systems, electricity grid capacity and resilient transport systems.

Minister **Velenkosini Hlabisa** (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA)) captured this sentiment in his keynote address:

“Climate change demands courage, commitment and collective leadership.”

Strong momentum on climate finance mobilisation and the Just Energy Transition (JET)

Securing finance for climate action is critical to creating successful and implementable projects. South Africa’s climate finance ecosystem demonstrated significant progress:

The NBI and GreenCape are implementing partners of the Ninety One Accelerator in Support of the Earthshot Prize which, in its pilot year (2025), has already mobilised R13 million in direct finance to climate tech businesses and innovators.

The Climate Finance Accelerator (CFA) entered its second cycle in 2025 supported by the United Kingdom’s Department for Energy Security and Net-Zero. In partnership with NBI, PWC UK and GreenCape, the Accelerator has already helped match entrepreneurs with over R2 billion in funding between 2021 to 2024.

Joanne Yawitch, Head of the Secretariat for the Just Energy Transition Project Management unit (JET PMU), confirmed that the JET Funding Platform is actively mobilising \$800 million in grant finance pledged under the broader JET initiative, with 26 projects registered and R70.6 million mobilised to date.

Key features of the discussion on the JET Partnership included:

- Strong consensus that SMME support is essential for inclusive impact.
- Recognition that continued investment in project preparation, technical assistance and capacity building is needed.
- Weekly investor pitching sessions led by the JET Funding Platform and key investors, accelerating capital-matching for emerging green enterprises, will continue.

Launch of the JET SEP Report: Building an Inclusive and Responsive Skills Ecosystem for a Just Energy Transition

In addition to these developments, the NBI launched the JET Skilling for Employment Programme (JET SEP) report: *Building an Inclusive and Responsive Skills Ecosystem for a Just Energy Transition*, a major

contribution to South Africa's skills and employment agenda in the transition. This is a key deliverable within the JET Skilling for Employment Programme (JET SEP) which is headlined by over 30 CEOs.

The report identifies:

- Gaps, opportunities and priority actions for building a future-fit, adaptable skills system.
- The need to align education and training systems with real economic activity in local industrial hubs.
- The critical but under-recognised contribution of SMMEs and micro-enterprises, particularly in solar installation, energy services and emerging green sectors.

The report also showcases JET SEP's progress in driving work-based learning, industry-aligned training and targeted partnerships to accelerate job creation and strengthen supplier ecosystems.

The next phase of JET SEP has secured funding to turn ambition into action. The cumulative work and collective effort of the programme over the past 18 months have been remarkable, leading to a firm funding commitment to begin implementing the strategic interventions outlined in the reports.

Report download [link](#).

Launch of the South African Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Report in partnership with the We Mean Business Coalition (WMBC): An opportunity to boost industrial competitiveness and attract investment

The NBI and WMBC jointly released a report highlighting that a credible, ambitious and investible NDC can provide businesses with the long-term certainty needed to scale clean technologies and strengthen climate resilience.

This report and associated Summit panel highlighted:

- South Africa's second NDC for 2035 is central to the country's transition and will provide a framework for business action. Business is addressing this context by investing in renewables, setting ambitious renewable energy targets and decarbonising their operations and supply chains.
- Collaboration and partnership with all spheres of government is important to be able to grow climate ambition.
- South Africa's climate transition is underway, but must accelerate to advance energy security, drive green industrialisation and boost export competitiveness.
- There is a significant need for the national power sector to transition to a much higher renewables mix. Over 110 companies with operations in South Africa have committed to achieving 100% renewable electricity usage by 2050, as was highlighted by the RE100 initiative of The Climate Group.
- A recent letter to Department of Electricity and Energy (DEE) Minister Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, signed by 14 corporates who employ 200,000 people in South Africa, contribute over R100 billion to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and consume 3.5 TWh of electricity per annum, endorsed the [RE100-NBI South Africa Policy Recommendations for Renewable](#)

Electricity. These recommendations, which were developed through extensive stakeholder consultation with the private sector, cities, provinces, technical experts, industry bodies and key national policymakers, call for:

- Accelerating electricity market reform to enable competitive renewables procurement
- Strengthening integrated planning and renewable energy-based electricity targets to guide investment
- Enabling and scaling direct corporate procurement through wheeling and standardised Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)
- Fast-tracking the roll-out of transmission infrastructure and grid connections, and streamlining project approvals for faster renewables deployment
- Expanding voluntary green power options

Report download link: <https://bit.ly/3M11KKc>

Maria Mendiluce (WMBC CEO) noted:

“Transitioning away from fossil fuels is not ideological, it is practical because it makes business sense.”

NDC implementation: Clear actions and realistic pathways

Session outcomes on the NDC strategy reaffirmed:

- The need for a systematic financing strategy for NDC delivery.
- National government’s obligation to support local government, which in turn supports the private sector.
- That the world is no longer on track for 1.5°C, meaning that mitigation and adaptation must intensify.

Quote of the day from Steve Nicholls, Africa Energy Futures: *“We need to minimise the time we are exposed to over 1.5 degrees.”*

Corporate transition pathways: Advancing decarbonisation and energy efficiency with Exxaro, Eskom, AECL, AcerlorMittal South Africa, DP World, Sasol and others

The Summit highlighted examples of private sector leadership:

Eskom–Exxaro MoU

A recently signed MoU will support:

- Desulphurisation technologies to reduce emissions and support local skills development.
- Waste beneficiation (e.g., fly-ash into roadbuilding materials).
- Community farming and entrepreneurship programmes.
- Exploration of EV deployment on mining sites.
- Transparent, measurable KPIs to track climate impact, job creation and community outcomes.

In a session entitled “Local power, local industry” which highlighted the complex environment for heavy manufacturing decarbonisation, AECL, ArcelorMittal South Africa, DP World and Sasol unpacked their commitments to decarbonising operations, improving energy efficiency and building collaborative partnerships to unlock further climate action.

In the South African context, it is vital to have high emitting companies participate in climate conversations as they are some of the largest employers and contributors to GDP in the country. Sessions held at the Summit highlighted that these companies are committed to being transparent about their sustainability journeys, noting both the challenges with transitioning to net-zero, and importantly, the opportunities.

South Africa’s opportunity: A resilient, sustainable, inclusive economy

Across sessions, a united message emerged: South Africa has the resources, expertise and global positioning to lead on climate action, but delivery must accelerate.

The Summit reaffirmed:

- Renewable energy, grid upgrades and electrification remain job-creating and competitiveness-enhancing opportunities.
- Climate action must also address inequality, poverty and unemployment, forming the backbone of a *just* transition.
- Steady implementation will advance localisation and value-chain development, helping to grow South Africa’s assembly and manufacturing capability, while advancing innovation in the green economy.
- South Africa’s long-term low-carbon development pathway will attract green investment and international climate finance.
- Policy coherence at the national level is critical to create the enabling environment for a workable transition.
- There is a need to scale up climate adaptation and resilience efforts, to strengthen water security, reduce disaster risks, and support livelihoods.

Quotes

Shameela Soobramoney, CEO of NBI:

“Implementation is not just a policy imperative; it is an economic opportunity. This Summit showed that South Africa has the leadership, partnerships and clarity of purpose to deliver real progress on climate action.”

Alex McNamara, Head of Environment, NBI:

“We have the policies and technical know-how. What we need now is collective focus, committed collaboration and a shared vision for South Africa’s future.”

Minister Hlabisa (COGTA):

“Local leadership is the beating heart of climate resilience. Cities, municipalities and communities must be empowered to lead the change.”

Cas Coovadia, B20 Sherpa and Chairperson of NBI:

“The NBI has been at the cutting edge of bringing business together in sustainable development and implementing key projects with impact - putting business at the centre of climate action and we, as the B20, will call on the NBI to help maintain the momentum in climate change and the just energy transition.”

Mzila Mthenjane, CEO, Minerals Council South Africa

“Ambition alone is not enough; action is what matters. Across South Africa, the mining industry is acting decisively. We are investing in energy efficiency and setting targets driven by science to ensure our commitments are measurable and transparent.”

END.