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NBI's Inaugural South Africa Climate Summit Charts a Clear Pathway for Climate Implementation and Inclusive Growth

1 December 2025, Johannesburg -The National Business Initiative's (NBI) inaugural South Africa Climate Summit, held on 24–25 November, concluded with strong national alignment on the need to accelerate climate implementation, strengthen climate finance flows and build an inclusive green economy that supports South Africa's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets for 2035.

Over two days and 28 sessions, leaders from business, government, finance, labour, civil society, youth, academia, municipalities and international partners came together with a singular focus: **shifting the country from climate ambition to climate delivery**. The Summit demonstrated that South Africa has the technical expertise, policy foundation and collaborative leadership needed to drive a resilient and competitive low-carbon economy, but underscored that urgent, coordinated implementation is now a necessity.

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. The Summit reaffirmed South Africa's strong positioning in the global climate landscape, particularly its comparative advantage in renewable energy and its role in supporting fair, inclusive economic development.

A key theme throughout the discussions was the central role of municipalities as the frontline of climate adaptation. Speakers emphasised the need to strengthen municipal technical capacity, integrate climate resilience into core development planning and enhance public-private partnerships to unlock investment into critical infrastructure such as water systems, storm-water networks, electricity grid capacity and resilient transport. This emphasis on local readiness underscored a broader recognition that climate adaptation and resilience must be embedded in South Africa's development trajectory.

Climate finance emerged as another area of strong momentum. The Summit highlighted significant progress within the investment ecosystem, including new capital flows to climate-tech innovators through the Ninety One Accelerator, implemented in partnership with the NBI and GreenCape, which mobilised **R13 million** in 2025. The growing impact of the [Climate Finance Accelerator \(CFA\)](#), delivered by the NBI, PwC UK and GreenCape, was noted; the programme has facilitated more than **R2 billion** in matches between entrepreneurs and investors since 2021.

Joanne Yawitch, Head of the Just Energy Transition Project Management unit (JET PMU) Secretariat, underscored the need for continued investment in project preparation, technical assistance and SMME development. She noted that the JET Funding Platform is mobilising the \$800 million in pledged grant finance and supporting a growing pipeline of projects.

On the skills front, the launch of the JET Skilling for Employment Programme (JET SEP) Report marked a major contribution to South Africa's long-term transition. The report identifies priority skills needs, highlights opportunities for work-based learning and emphasises the critical role of SMMEs and micro-

enterprises in expanding green jobs, especially in solar installation and emerging energy services. With new funding secured, the next phase of JET SEP will begin implementing these recommendations.

The Summit also reflected the rising ambition across the private sector. Through the launch of the South Africa NDC Note, developed in partnership with the We Mean Business Coalition (WMBC), the NBI emphasised the importance of aligning corporate action with national climate targets. The RE100 initiative of The Climate Group further highlighted that more than **110 companies** operating in South Africa have committed to achieving **100% renewable electricity by 2050**, reinforcing calls for accelerated electricity market reform, grid expansion, streamlined approvals and enabling frameworks for wheeling and direct corporate procurement.

Sessions highlighting sector leadership showed clear progress in decarbonisation, energy efficiency, circular-economy innovation and industrial competitiveness across mining, manufacturing, logistics and energy. Stakeholders reiterated that high-emitting industries, given their scale, employment significance and economic contribution, remain essential partners in achieving a just and workable transition.

Across all discussions, a unified message emerged: **South Africa has the opportunity, capability and global positioning to lead on climate action, but delivery must now accelerate.** Climate action can lower household energy costs, drive industrial growth, promote local manufacturing, build new green value chains, attract investment and create jobs, supporting a more inclusive economic future.

Shameela Soobramoney, CEO of the National Business Initiative (NBI), reflected on the Summit's outcomes and shared, *"This Summit affirmed that climate action is not separate from South Africa's development agenda; it is central to it. By aligning policy, investment and skills, we can build an economy that is low-carbon, inclusive and globally competitive."*

Download reports:

- Building an Inclusive and Responsive Skills Ecosystem for a Just Energy Transition: <https://bit.ly/3JZhAV5>
- South Africa's 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution: An opportunity to boost industrial competitiveness and attract investment: <https://bit.ly/3M11KKc>

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