

Kusile pollution exemption necessary as temporary measure

President Cyril Ramaphosa says the granting of a postponement for Kusile Power Station to operate without sulphur dioxide pollution control technology does not deviate from the country's firm affirmation to contribute to the global climate change efforts to reduce greenhouse gases.



Image source: Alena Mzhjer – 123RF.com

President Ramaphosa said this while answering oral questions in the National Council of Provinces on Thursday.

“The granting of a postponement for Kusile Power Station to operate without sulphur dioxide pollution control technology was necessary as a temporary measure to enable the return to service of three units damaged in October last year.

“The granting of this postponement does not deviate from the country’s firm affirmation to contribute to the global climate change efforts in reducing greenhouse gases.

“As a country, we are committed to a just transition to a low-carbon economy at a pace and scale that is affordable to us,”

the President said.

The President told the House that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change recognises this need for a just transition and has allowed countries to nationally determine their contribution to a global effort to decarbonisation.

“South Africa submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution to the UN in 2021 and as I have indicated previously, we remain firmly committed to achieving our target range for emission reduction. Data from our recent greenhouse gas inventory indicates that we are on track to do so.

“As part of the granting of the once-off postponement, Eskom must undertake measures to mitigate against the exposure of its employees and surrounding communities to harmful emissions. These measures must, at a minimum, include independent health screenings and referral to appropriate public health facilities for treatment where necessary,” the President said.

He said the end of load shedding and the achievement of energy security for all South Africans is not incompatible with the pursuit of the country’s emission reduction goals.

The President emphasised that the massive investment that is currently underway in renewable energy sources, alongside the stabilisation and improvement of our existing generation fleet, will help the country to achieve both of these goals simultaneously.

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