

Media release on behalf of Northern Cape irrigation farmers: 18 January 2023

Power equals food, and food equals power for all of South Africa

Northern Cape irrigation farmers are appealing for all differences to be cast aside and for the nation to unite to combat the electricity crisis.

The farmers arranged for a media conference to be held at 11:00 on Friday 20 January 2023 in Douglas in the Northern Cape regarding the crisis. Farmers in several other districts, such as Hopetown, Prieska and Vaalharts, will also raise awareness about the electricity crisis during this time as a positive gesture showing that the agricultural sector wants to be part of the solution to a national challenge that can push South Africa over the edge.

The current electricity crisis spares no-one. While crops under irrigation wither, lightbulbs flicker faintly due to the energy crisis, television sets stand silent, and factories are closed during load shedding like the doors of small businesses and stores. Unemployment compounds while the economy languishes with every flick of the switch.

Stage 6 load shedding and the recent heatwave potentially caused unimaginable damage to irrigation crops. Electricity is desperately needed to save harvests under irrigation. All citizens are already sacrificing to overcome rolling blackouts and food security needs protection at all costs.

The agricultural sector and related industries must provide food for the entire country to power it forward into the future. We need electricity to do this: "Power equals food, and food equals power for all of South Africa."

South Africa has stared into the abyss many times before, but we have remained resolute in the face of adversity. To give up hope is yet again not an option. South Africa must work to provide a productive home to all her people.

The request to President Cyril Ramaphosa is to intervene in the electricity crisis and that the electricity provisions and recommendations contained in the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan (AAMP) be implemented.

Enough hours of uninterrupted electricity is required for proper planning and scheduling of load shedding to be done on a regional level for different sectors.

It is understood that everyone needs to contribute to relieve pressure on the electricity network. Mutual cooperation with Eskom is needed to develop and implement the correct solutions on a regional level for the weeks ahead.

More detail regarding the scope of the current crisis, the message to President Ramaphosa and possible solutions will be shared during the media conference. The media conference is scheduled for Friday 20 January 2023 at 11:00 and will be held at the Douglas Lucerne Pool facility outside Douglas.

Ends