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JUSTICE
CHARTER
MOVEMENT



SAFSC
SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD
SOVEREIGNTY CAMPAIGN



COPAC
CO-OPERATIVE AND POLICY ALTERNATIVE CENTER

Press Statement

TO:

Ms Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Social Development

Mr Gwede Mantashe, Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy

Ms Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

Parliament portfolio committees on Social Development; Mineral Resources and Energy; and Environment Forestry and Fisheries

27 May 2021

Eradicating hunger through a Basic Income Grant, No to Fossil Fuels and support for small-scale fishers

On the 26th of May, the Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC) convened this year's third National Food Crisis Forum (NFCF) with the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC) and allies of the Climate Justice Charter Movement.

The discontinuation of the social relief of distress grant will be a nail in the coffin for the more than 14 million South Africans who are going to bed hungry. It will worsen poverty and inequality by collapsing the safety net that so many relied upon. This is because trickledown economics and austerity measures are not working. At this pivotal moment, the government must implement a Universal Basic Income Grant #UBIGNOW. The recently launched [Alternative Macroeconomic and #UBIGNOW Approach and Policy Document](#) and [UBIG scenarios document](#) lays out the fiscally neutral UBIG that pays for itself through progressive taxation, without increasing the debt to GDP ratio.

Last year the NFCF stood in solidarity with subsistence fisher folks in KZN and Western Cape who were not able to fish during the first few months of lockdown and we continue to support them and the call to 'unlock the commons'. In continuity with our support for subsistence fishers, the NFCF rejects the recent cabinet approved Upstream Petroleum Resources Development Bill that will provide the legal framework for destroying our oceans, fisheries and the environment (more generally) through deep sea drilling, oil explorations and fracking. Further marine and commons destruction shows that our government does not comprehend the scale of the ecological and climate crisis. It also indicates that our government does not understand global economic trends as investors, financial institutions and leading economists are advocating divestment from fossil fuels. Even the International Energy Agency recent research report calls for all oil, gas and fossil fuel investment to stop if 'net zero' is to be achieved by 2050. The UK Government hosting the COP Summit this year has also declared that one of the outcomes it is expecting is a firm commitment to phase out coal globally. Powerships, as an energy source for the next 20 years, is a disastrous decision by the government, when there are cheaper socially owned renewable energy options available. We reject it and further investments in the carbon intensive minerals energy complex. We also call on parliament to reject the gas and oil bill

and the Karpowership contract given that it undermines South Africa's nationally determined climate commitments and the deep just transition. Put differently, such policy choices increase global warming and undermine our constitutional right to a safe environment, as per section 24 of the South African constitution.

The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has failed to protect small scale fishers during the pandemic and has not reversed the consequences of the 1988 Marine Living Resources Act which only recognised commercial and recreational fishers. Small scale fishers' rights have been trampled upon by a capitalist government hell-bent on serving large corporations and failing to uphold its constitutional obligation of serving the people. We affirm our support for small scale fishers, especially women fishers who are worst affected.

Progressive forces must unite to tackle this crisis of socio-ecological reproduction. At this pivotal juncture when neoliberals want to greenwash capitalism, we must be resolute in our fight for a deep just transition and taking back our democracy from the looters.

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