

# Public-private collaboration key to expanding Eskom's transmission, says Minister

In his recent Electricity Action Plan press briefing, Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, the Minister in the Presidency for Electricity, stressed the necessity of public-private collaboration in expanding and strengthening Eskom's transmission capabilities. The endeavour, he noted, would demand a significant allocation of resources.



Ramokgopa highlighted the potential of private sector liquidity to facilitate grid expansion, thereby accommodating the integration of renewable energy solutions currently awaiting connection due to transmission constraints.

"We are looking to tap into the liquidity that is available from the private sector to allow us an opportunity to expand the grid so that we are able to accommodate the renewable energy solutions that have been rolled out in the country, and a number of them have not been connected to the grid as a result of the constraint on the transmission side," he told the media.



## Kusile Unit 4 returns, load shedding down to Stage 4

18 Sep 2023



"The transmission expansion and strengthening exercise will require a considerable amount of resources and we know that the Eskom balance sheet is constrained, and we know that the sovereign matrix has deteriorated, so it's important that we explore opportunities for the country to tap into the liquidity that is sitting with the private sector."

He said government is “doing everything possible” to engage the private sector on what will attract more investment in transmission.

"We don't want to repeat the same mistakes that have been committed on the generation side, where we kicked the can down the road, and we just thought that the private sector on its own will come into the space and resolve the issues of generation capacity constraints," Ramokgopa continued.

"What we know is that the State must be a very active participant in that space and that's why we are doing everything possible to create those conditions. For us to create those conditions, it is necessary upfront, to have an appreciation and understanding from the private sector what are some of those... conditionalities that in their own view will make it possible for them to be able to finance."

### **Maintenance of power stations**

Turning to planned maintenance of power stations, Ramokgopa said Eskom will continue to carry this out on generating units.

"We will continue relentlessly with our efforts to ensure that planned maintenance gets to be executed. The intention is to make sure that everything possible is done to address the issues around the possibility of these units failing, going into the future."

"Therefore, planned maintenance is something that receives our attention and we are going to be diligent in ensuring that we are able to execute planned maintenance so that we are able to derive the benefit going into the future..." he said.

On Eskom's Unplanned Capacity Loss Factor [UCLF], progress was recorded from the week 18-22 September.

"[The UCLF] averaged about 13,751MW and... we are now beginning to be consistently below 15,000MW."

"We are striving to go even below 13,000MW to ensure that we have as many megawatts available because once we reduce the [UCLF], those megawatts get to be added to the available capacity and they are also able to defray the intensity of planned maintenance."

"That's why there's no reason, as a result of this exercise of reducing the [UCLF], for us to further intensify load shedding to levels that are unacceptable. Of course, load shedding by definition is unacceptable," he said.

### **Load shedding**

The minister also reflected on the lower stages of load shedding over the long weekend and the uptick in load shedding stages announced by Eskom on Monday.

"It came back yesterday on account of a number of reasons, including the challenges that we are experiencing in the Western Cape as a result of the weather conditions there. Palmiet [pumped storage hydro power station] was a big casualty of those conditions and we were unable to exploit Palmiet, our pump station there."

"On account of the inclement weather in the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape and our desire to make sure that we are able to support the efforts of the... emergency people to address and respond to the challenges that are associated with the... storms that have been experienced there, a decision was taken by Eskom to say that those areas, because of the difficulties that they are experiencing, will be exempt from load shedding and then the rest of the country will carry the load," he said.

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