

Mabele Fuels
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14 January 2014



Biofuels key to rural transformation and agricultural job creation

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA: Mabele Fuels - a pioneering investor of the nascent biofuels industry in South Africa, welcomes the commitment by the African National Congress, to job creation and rural transformation in the party's 2014 election manifesto. In particular, Mabele Fuels welcomes the election manifesto's explicit commitment to encourage investment in biofuels production for agricultural job creation and achieving greater energy self sufficiency.

Since the release of the 2007 Biofuels Industrial Strategy, Mabele Fuels has answered the call from Government for private sector investment in developing South Africa's biofuels industry. The company has participated extensively in key Government consultations on the development of the industry regulations and has stood ever ready to make a sizable multi billion rand investment. Government's Industrial Policy Action Plan identifies biofuels as a contributor to industrial growth. The National Development Plan identifies biofuels as a future option for liquid fuels and economic infrastructure development.

According to Mabele Fuels Joint CEO Mr. Zahir Williams: "The development of the South African biofuels industry has the ability to deliver large scale job creation that will help raise employment levels in rural areas in particular. We therefore implore Government – in particular the Department of Energy, to finalise the long outstanding biofuels regulations.

Mabele Fuels is at an advanced stage of readiness to make a R2.5 billion rand investment to develop and operate South Africa's largest bioethanol refinery in Bothaville in the rural Free State. In order to proceed with its tight construction schedule to meet the 1 October 2015 timeframe for mandatory blending of biofuels with petrol (as promulgated by the Minister of Energy on 29 September 2013) and access the funding committed under stringent conditions, Mabele Fuels requires urgent finalisation and expeditious closure of the outstanding biofuels regulations by the Department of Energy.

"In making this call on Government, we are proactively and conscientiously responding to the call on the private sector to invest and partner Government in job creation, industrial and rural development. We are also responding to the call by the Deputy President of the ANC, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa following the launch of the party's 2014 elections manifesto, for the private sector to be bold and point Government to blockages and factors inhibiting job creation. The finalisation of the outstanding biofuels regulations is such a case in point. Our project and the development of the industry represents an immediate rural, agricultural and industrial development opportunity. We are making an impassioned plea to Government to urgently address this matter in line with the national priority focus on rural development and transformation", adds Williams.

The Mabele Fuels project enjoys strong support and stewardship from the Free State Provincial Government under the leadership Free State Premier Mr. Ace Magashule. Together with the Free State Development Corporation, the project is seen as a key contributor to unlocking much needed industrial and infrastructure development and investment in the region.

Mabele Fuels will make further pronouncements on the biofuels regulations and the future of its project.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Mabele Fuels is a South African company owned by Black Economic Empowerment groupings, emerging farmers, local investment institutions and private investors. Its business is the manufacture of fuel-grade ethanol from grain sorghum for sale in the South African bio fuels market. Grain sorghum is cultivated in South Africa's traditional summer grain areas, like the eastern Free State and eastern parts of the North West provinces, which receive summer rainfall. It is an ideal crop for bio fuels because it can withstand droughts and works well on fallow soil.

Mabele Fuels is at an advanced state of readiness to commence construction of a large-scale bio ethanol refinery (158 million litres per annum) in the Bothaville area of the Free State province. The project has enjoyed strong Government support and recognition. Mabele Fuels is expecting imminent Government approval to enable immediate implementation of its refinery construction program, for completion before the 1 October 2015 effective date of the mandatory bio fuels blending regulations. On 30 September, the Minister of Energy promulgated 1 October 2015 as the commencement date for the coming into effect of mandatory blending of petrol and diesel with bio fuels. There has since been significant public discourse and debate about the matter, which is likely to continue into the future as the local bio fuels industry develops toward this vision.

www.mabelefuels.com

Mabele Fuel has published a set of Frequently Asked Questions about biofuels in South Africa. This is available for download in PDF at:

<http://www.ethicore.co.za/resources/mabele-fuels/>

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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