

SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE AGN DURING GST FOCUS DISCUSSIONS, 9 AND 10 NOVEMBER 2022

FIRST GST FOCUS DISCUSSION, 9 NOVEMBER 2022

South Africa stresses the need, as expert speaker Dr Debra Roberts and others here have highlighted, to locate climate action within the context of people-centred sustainable development and Just Transitions. This development context was a key focus in the South African national workshop on the GST. We would be happy to share the outcomes of that workshop with this process (see attached).

A practical first step is to develop a national framework on Just Transition, based on the specific national circumstances and capacities of the country in question. Here we underscore the point made by Ghana on behalf of the AGN that there is no single pathway to development and each country needs to find its own development model and set its own vision on the way forward to contribute to the delivery of global goals. For South Africa and many other African countries this context is the priority to address inequality, poverty and unemployment and the purpose of the transition is to achieve a more just society domestically and a more equitable world.

An inclusive stakeholder approach is required and we would highlight here the particular importance of including the workers on the frontline whose jobs and livelihoods are most affected. We need to give assurances that we are seeking more, better and greener jobs that are comparable in nature to their current jobs. We find the global narratives on “shutting down”, “closing”, “phasing out” and so on unhelpful and alienating. That is not our purpose. Rather we should be talking about repurposing and reskilling and preserving and improving our industrial base.

A key aspect of the Just Transition is providing proof of concept and evidence that there will be a market for the new greener sources of energy and technology. Developing countries very often lack economies of scale and this leads to a situation where breakthrough technologies and processes developed and led in the global South migrate to the more lucrative and larger markets elsewhere, including the global North, and our people do not see the benefits. As African developing countries, we need assurances that there will be markets and that we will have access to those markets.

A final message is that top-down, imposed and one-size-fits-all approaches to complex problems of transition and mitigation will not work and will only lead to pushback.