

STATEMENT MADE ON BEHALF OF THE LIMPOPO ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION FORUM ("LEAF") AT THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING FOR COAL 3 AND 4 IN LEPHALALE ON 26 NOVEMBER 2008

1.

As the attorney of LEAF, I would like to make this statement which we would like to have included as part of the official record for this meeting.

2.

Tonight we have heard from Eskom and its representatives a very compelling case for coal and why coal should be preferred as the only viable option to increase base load capacity. This is understandably so as Eskom's main business is producing energy from coal. It is therefore understandable that Eskom is passionate about coal. It has also been suggested tonight that now that we are aware of this project we are all disciples for the project and should go out and tell everybody with an interest in this project about the details and get them involved. I believe that this is also correct. But I think there is more to this project than we have discussed here tonight and that is the issue of sustainability. Once these coal stations come to the end of their lives and once the coal fields are depleted that is effectively the end of the energy source. This would be in 50 or 60 years time but there must be a more sustainable solution and I think this is something that we have not addressed here tonight. My challenge to all of you present here at this meeting is to drive through the coal fields in Mpumalanga and then revisit this project and try and project the impacts in your own mind of what this area might be like in 50 or 60 years time. Drive through Ogies, Witbank, Hendrina, Ermelo, Piet Retief. The environment is devastated and it is likely that it will never be properly rehabilitated. This visual impact excludes the unseen danger of climate change. There must be a way that this project can proceed without repeating the mistakes that are so evident in that area and that has led to the substantial environmental degradation.

3.

So what is that we are part of here tonight? Is it the selection of one farm 30km from Lephalale over another 35km from Lephalale. These are certainly important issues and very important particularly for the directly affected landowners. Is it the method of cooling that will be used in the towers? Is it the manner in which the coal will be supplied to the power stations? These are details and very important details but there is a much bigger issue at stake. If this project is not done properly it could lead to the destruction of the bushveld and the Waterberg and the change of Limpopo for the worse, forever. How can I make these statements on behalf of LEAF? It is easy as we have proof. As I have already mentioned we have destroyed the eastern half of Mpumalanga in the insatiable quest for coal and now it seems we are moving on to the west. But are the two

coal fields compatible – scale wise? Is it possible that this project and others like it could ruin Limpopo forever? South Africa's total installed capacity is approximately 40 000 megawatts. These two stations (coal 3 and 4) alone will produce 10 800 megawatts – more than 1 quarter of the existing installed capacity. In addition the estimates of the size of the Waterberg coal fields vary greatly from 5 billion tons to 50 billions so I think the answer is yes. These projects and the scale of the Waterberg coal fields are big enough to destroy Limpopo if not done properly.

4.

It is my contention that we have one chance to plan this development properly and factor these costs into the project or else the mistakes of Witbank will be repeated.

5.

Eskom's primary motivation for this project is that it is necessary for economic growth. South Africa must increase its energy supply in order to grow the economy. Due to poor planning in the past the reserve margin is low – so we have blackouts such as those experienced early in 2008. It is true if South Africa plans to continue to be a low value, resource based, low skills economy then we will have to increase electricity output significantly. But this increase is not for schools, clinics and towns. This increase is for refineries, smelters and even to be exported to other countries. I have been told that this information is available on Eskom's website in their annual report and I undertake to familiarize myself with these reports before the next meeting which I think we should all do.

6.

This is the dilemma we face as 21st century human beings. Growing wealth in a sustainable manner so that there is something left of the environment for our children. Is building some of the largest coal fired stations in the world the way to do this? Is mining the magnificent Waterberg the way to achieve this? In my mind it cannot be so and the reason is that we must pursue sustainability.

7.

The members of LEAF urge all other people of Limpopo, landowners and interested and affected parties to join together to get involved in this project to find alternative solutions.

8.

Eskom has repeatedly asked the landowners to trust Eskom and stated that it does act in the best interest of South African people and has the environment at heart. LEAF hopes and expects to witness proof of this during the EIA process.