

**ADDRESS BY THE CEO OF THE NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT FUND,  
MS PHILISIWE BUTHELEZI,  
ON THE OCASSION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE  
NEF ASONGE SHARE SCHEME**

**SATURDAY, 23 JUNE 2007, CONSTITUTION HILL, Johannesburg**

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Distinguished guests,

Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

The Deputy President of the Republic, the Hon. Ms Phumzile Mlambo-  
Ngquka,

The Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Mandisi Mpahlwa,

Minister in the Presidency, the Hon. Dr Essop Pahap,

The Minister of Transport, the Hon. Mr Jeff Radebe

The Minister of Communications, the Hon. Dr Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri

The Minister of Public Works, the Hon. Ms Thoko Didiza

The Premier of Gauteng, the Hon. Mr Mbhazima Shilowa

The Premier of the Western Cape, the Hon. Mr Ebrahim Rasool

Gauteng MEC for Health, the Hon. Mr Brian Hlongwa

KZN MEC for Finance and Economic Affairs, the Hon. Dr Zweli Mkhize

Honourable Members of Parliament,

The Chairperson, Members of the Board of Trustees, the CEO and the  
Executive of the National Empowerment Fund,

Respected leaders of commerce and industry, and Editors present,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today the NEF launches an exciting and historic once-off share offering of MTN shares, for the exclusive benefit of Black individuals, and in this instance, the benefit will extend exclusively to any Black South African citizen, of African, Indian or Coloured status, from the age 18 years and above.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this share offer is unique because the NEF's formula for allocating the shares has been deliberately designed to benefit the largest number of Black savings groups.

These include stokvels, burial societies and other savings groups, as well as black individuals, with a bias towards women, youth and people with disabilities.

Honourable Deputy President, Broad based black investors are now in a position to purchase these shares directly, and this opportunity will allow these groups just identified to obtain direct ownership of these shares in a listed blue-chip company at a substantial discount.

Affordability is always an important consideration in our country, and in this regard, I'm especially pleased that the NEF Asonge Share Scheme provides a highly affordable entry point for both individuals and groups as the minimum required to get a share allocation is R2 000. The further design of the investment thresholds was done to ensure that the benefit of this innovative scheme is spread to as many broad based beneficiaries as possible, and that is one of the cornerstones of our broad based BEE policy.

I believe that it is a commendable characteristic of Asonge that shares will be allocated to ensure a provincial bias, in accordance with the population size of the target market per province. This is to ensure that participation is extended equitably across the country, and that NO one province enjoys unfair and overall benefit. With this product together we assert the right of every village and every township, in every province of our country, to subscribe equitably to the financial participation which South Africa has to offer.

Another of Asonge's unique and exceptional features is that not only is it in line with government's objective to draw more historically disadvantaged individuals into the mainstream of the economy, but it seeks to encourage a culture of saving by rewarding those investors who will hold on to their shares beyond the mandatory lock-in period of one year.

In order to encourage long term investment Asonge shareholders will be rewarded by providing 1 bonus share for every 10 held after a full 2-year period.

Given that these shares are being offered to the target investors at a substantial discount of 20%, it becomes clear that the investors will realize immediate value and what's more there is scope for considerable up-side in the share with some significant protection on the down side.

In designing products of this nature, the NEF had to conduct comprehensive research and planning in order to identify the perceptions and obstacles that face the average Black individual who has the potential to save and invest their money, regardless of how large or small that amount may be. One of the key obstacles identified was that existing products did not come with the education and support-programmes that are required to fully explain the benefits of investing and saving, as well as the rewards and risks associated with these products.

The NEF has identified these factors, and accordingly, built them into the features of this product as well as the activities behind the launch itself. Hence there is a national and comprehensive investor education campaign that commences tomorrow in key provincial locations. Our objective is to explain the opportunity behind this product as well as the subscription process which is taking place through the extensive network of Post Office outlets.

Thus the target groups, which include stokvels, savings groups, burial societies and others, will be able to access Asonge from their closest local Post Office.

Allow me, Programme Director, to outline the various destinations which the NEF will travel to in order to take Asonge to the people.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of June our teams will gather at Queens Park in Kimberley, to talk to the people of the Northern Cape about the importance of saving and investment.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of June we will deploy one of our teams to the Cricket Club in Polokwane, and another to Tlhabane Stadium in Rustenburg, where the people of Limpopo and of the North West, respectively, will also receive the call to enter into the mainstream of the economy.

We will not stop there. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of June our teams of mobilisers will meet the people at the Richardson Park in Umtata, and the other at the Lochlogan Park in Welkom, to take the good news about participation in the national economy, to the Eastern Cape and the Free State.

The following weekend, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, we will call the people to Ackerville Stadium in Witbank, as well as to Gugu Dlamini Park in Durban, to say to the people of Mpumalanga and KwaZulu Natal, respectively, Asonge is here. Take advantage of this unique opportunity.

Our mobilization campaign will culminate on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, where, in Mofolo Park in Soweto, as well as in Khayelitsha in Cape Town, both Gauteng and the Western Cape will be invited to catch up with the rest of the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have an obligation to go to the people because Asonge belongs to the people. We intend, with this share offer, to dispel the myth that empowerment transactions only benefit a select few. It is for that reason that Asonge will be allocated to ensure a provincial bias in accordance with the population size of the target market per province.

The mobilization drive will also be supported by a comprehensive education, marketing and communications campaign.

This will comprise advertisements and editorial coverage in local community radio stations and newspapers, as well as on national radio stations and television channels, and mainstream newspapers. Messages will also be printed inside local and long-distance taxis, to promote the widest possible public education about the initiative.

The Honourable the Deputy President, I am pleased to inform this august gathering that our communication will be done not only in English, but in all the eleven official languages of Mzantsi Afrika. We will do that because Asonge belongs to the people.

We believe that Asonge will revolutionize the way share offers will be structured in future, especially with regard to intensive investor-education campaigns, ensuring equitable provincial allocation, as well as making certain that people with disabilities, youth and women, also share in the benefit.

Government, through the NEF, is leading by example and wishes to encourage the private sector to follow suite, and to follow the guidance provided in the Codes of Good Practice,

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests, please help us spread the message that Asonge has finally arrived.

Thank you

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Ms Philisiwe Buthelezi  
The Chief Executive Officer  
National Empowerment Fund  
Constitution Hill, Johannesburg  
Saturday, 23 June 2007