MARITIME BUSINESS CHAMBER (MBC)
NPC: 2016 / 276565 / 08
Maritime Chamber House, 211 Walmer Boulevard, South End, Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 41 587 5855 (Also on WhatsApp) Email: adminoffice@maritimechamber.co.za Web: www.maritimechamber.co.za

MBC
MARITIME BUSINESS CHAMBER

MEDIA STATEMENT | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11 November 2026 | Gqeberha, South Africa

South Africa Cannot Afford to Be Left Behind as Namibia Advances Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration – MBC

Gqeberha, South Africa – The Maritime Business Chamber (MBC) has welcomed the South African government's decision to dismiss appeals against the environmental authorisation granted for TotalEnergies' offshore oil and gas exploration in Block 3B/4B, off the country's West Coast.
The Chamber believes the decision sends an encouraging signal to investors and presents an opportunity for South Africa to move forward with greater confidence in developing its offshore energy resources.

However, MBC cautions that regulatory progress alone will not create jobs, attract sustained investment or build industries. What South Africa needs now is clear government commitment, practical implementation and a deliberate strategy to ensure that South Africans benefit from the opportunities offshore exploration can create.

"South Africa cannot continue sitting on enormous economic potential while investment, jobs and opportunities pass us by. We have the resources, the geographical advantage and the industrial capabilities. What we need is the determination to turn these advantages into real economic activity," said Mr Unathi Sonti, Executive Chairperson of the Maritime Business Chamber.

Namibia Is Moving Forward. South Africa Must Do the Same.

The Chamber points to neighbouring Namibia, where significant offshore exploration and appraisal activities in the Orange Basin are attracting international investment and positioning the country as an emerging player in Africa's energy industry.

South Africa shares this geological region and stands to benefit from growing investor interest in Southern Africa's offshore resources. Yet potential alone will not secure investment.
"Namibia is demonstrating what can happen when a country takes its offshore energy potential seriously. South Africa should be drawing lessons from its neighbour, not watching from the sidelines. We need a government that actively embraces responsible exploration, provides regulatory certainty

and creates an environment in which investment can translate into economic opportunities for our people," **Sonti said.**

The Chamber believes that South Africa must move beyond prolonged uncertainty and demonstrate that responsible offshore exploration has a place in the country's broader economic and industrial development agenda.

This message was particularly relevant during African Energy Week 2026 in Cape Town, where governments, investors and industry leaders discussed Africa's growing energy opportunities. **At the event, Analene Enslin, South African Country Manager of Eco Atlantic Oil & Gas, raised an important question: "We need to ask whether our supply chains, logistics, equipment and local services are ready to support a similar level of activity."**

For MBC, this question goes to the heart of South Africa's readiness.

Our ports, maritime service providers, marine engineering companies, logistics operators and technical workforce must be prepared to support offshore exploration. Waiting until major projects are underway before developing local capacity would be a missed opportunity.

Offshore Exploration Must Translate into South African Opportunities

The Chamber maintains that the true economic value of offshore oil and gas exploration extends well beyond the discovery of resources.

It is found in the opportunities created for shipping, vessel maintenance, marine manufacturing, offshore support services, logistics, engineering, skills development and the wider maritime supply chain.

These opportunities must reach South African businesses, particularly Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women, young people and communities along our coastline.

"We cannot have billions invested in activities taking place in South African waters while our own businesses and communities remain spectators. Local participation must be part of the investment conversation from the beginning, not an afterthought when contracts have already been awarded," **Sonti emphasised.**

MARITIME BUSINESS CHAMBER (MBC)
NPC: 2016 / 276565 / 08
Maritime Chamber House, 211 Walmer Boulevard, South End, Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 41 587 5855 (Also on WhatsApp) Email: adminoffice@maritimechamber.co.za Web: www.maritimechamber.co.za

MBC therefore calls on government and exploration companies to prioritise local procurement, supplier development, technical training, skills transfer and meaningful employment opportunities. The Chamber also believes that preparing South African enterprises to compete for these opportunities must begin now, through closer collaboration between government, industry, training institutions and business organisations.

Environmental Protection and Economic Development Must Go Hand in Hand

While firmly supporting offshore exploration, MBC reiterates that environmental responsibility must remain central to every project.

Exploration companies must comply with South Africa's environmental legislation, honour the conditions attached to their authorisations and engage meaningfully with fishing communities and other affected stakeholders.

The Chamber believes that environmental protection and economic development should not be treated as opposing ambitions. South Africa must have the confidence and institutional capacity to pursue both.

"Protecting our oceans is not negotiable. Neither should we lose sight of our responsibility to build an economy that creates jobs, develops industries and improves people's lives. Responsible exploration means respecting environmental requirements while giving lawful, properly authorised projects the opportunity to move forward," said Sonti.

The Time for Action Is Now

MBC urges the South African government to turn the positive regulatory developments surrounding Block 3B/4B into broader momentum for the country's offshore energy sector.

This requires consistent policy direction, efficient regulatory processes, investor confidence and a practical plan to strengthen South Africa's maritime industrial capacity.

The Chamber will continue engaging government, exploration companies and industry stakeholders to promote responsible investment and ensure that emerging maritime enterprises are not excluded from the opportunities ahead.

"South Africa must decide whether it wants to be a serious participant in Africa's emerging offshore energy economy or remain a country that continually speaks about its potential. Namibia is moving forward. We have every reason to move forward too, responsibly and with our people at the centre of development," Sonti concluded.

The Maritime Business Chamber's position remains clear: South Africa must protect its oceans, develop its resources responsibly and ensure that the economic benefits are felt by South Africans.

ENDS

Issued by:
Maritime Business Chamber (MBC)
Office of the Executive Chairperson
Mr Unathi Sonti
Contact: +27 41 587 585
Website: www.maritimechamber.org
Maritime For Us ALL!
An Anchor and a Place of Refuge for the Maritime Industry.

For Inquiries: +27 41 587 5855 or ongimagoboloMBC@maritimechamber.co.za
www.maritimechamber.org