

# Times of turmoil inspire us to seek hope and plan for action

By [Godfrey Marema](#)

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Global and local events are a rollercoaster at the moment - from military action in Eastern Europe to political turmoil in Western Europe, natural disasters and consistent slow economic growth here in South Africa - all surging forward as the world slowly recovers from the devastating Covid-19 pandemic of the last two years.



Godfrey Marema, managing director and plant manager for Eaton in Southern Africa

While the news is heart-breaking and the events are daunting, we need to look beyond the immediate turmoil and seek hope, identify opportunities, and plan action. The last two years have shown us what is possible if we put our minds to it: commerce and trade carried on from people's dining room tables and patios while innovations such as telemedicine were adopted without hesitation. Once it was all over, the world rebounded, having learned lessons in efficiency, on-demand retail, and how to work together to survive a global nightmare.

## New challenges emerge

With the pandemic subsiding, new challenges have emerged. For example, the conflict in Eastern Europe has sent energy prices soaring – which has in turn compelled the world's most energy intensive countries to re-evaluate their source markets and indeed their whole approach to energy.

In time, this is likely to accelerate innovation in renewable energy installations in each country as they seek to limit their dependence on other nations for such key resources while reducing costs and supporting moves to limit their impact on climate change.

The vulnerability of South Africa's energy resources has again been highlighted through emergency load shedding schedules implemented with more expected through the winter.

Along with significant increases in energy costs agreed to by the energy regulator, it's likely that Eskom's cost base will increase as coal prices surge due to scarcity in Europe and the demand for coal exports rises as the rest of the world's hunger for energy grows.



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## Shifting away from an unsustainable energy system

It's clearer than ever that the transition to renewable energy needs to speed up, and the disruptions currently experienced across the world should be seen as catalysts for the rapid technological and behavioural change that we need to shift away from an unsustainable energy system that's centred around non-renewable fossil fuel resources.

Eaton welcomes the recently announced opening of Window 6 of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers

Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) for this reason, and we're looking forward to more such opportunities for the South African market to become a global leader in alternative energy sources, from solar to hydrogen, and everything in between.

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## No time like the present

A collaborative effort from both the private and public sector can help provide solutions and technologies that respond to the social issues around us. This could be through bringing innovative solutions like microgrids to suburbs and communities, or whether it's through investing in skills development among the people who work for us so that they can grow and become leaders in their own right.

There really is no time like the present to approach current challenges as opportunities to change our business model, taking action to change the way we seek energy, the way we harness and store it, and to limit the climatic consequences of our actions for the benefit and survival of future generations.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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