



ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY,

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**WORKING TOGETHER TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT: 24 August 2011**

MALIBONGWE.... Igama lamaKhosikazi

Programme Director, August is a month of celebrating women, their sacrifices in building our nation and ensuring economic and social development for the benefit of all South Africans.

This event demonstrates our commitment to pursue the fulfillment of our historic mission to eradicate gender oppression, which in the words of our Deputy President continues "*to constitute an unsightly scar on our conscience as a nation*"

As government we have put in place policies and legislation that seek to delete this unsightly scar. While we are not there yet, our policies have laid the basis for the emergence of a new breed of South African women who are seriously challenging the status quo. It is women who are educated, smart, dynamic and with strong personalities. It is women who can hold their own locally and internationally. Women like you.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the role of women in the energy sector has been underplayed for a long time. Economic empowerment, especially of women who constitute more than 50% of the population is an integral part of South Africa's transformation process. The empowerment of women in the energy sector is therefore crucial to the future viability and sustainability of the country's economy.

Our policy response to the need for transformation in the energy terrain has been the development of the Integrated Resources Plan (IRP 2010) that was approved by Cabinet in March this year.

The IRP takes cognisance of and responds to the changing energy needs in South Africa. It also talks to the importance of access to energy and an energy mix benefitting the designated groups, especially women who are the major users thereof and who are mostly affected by lack of access, availability, safety and affordability of energy.

The IRP represents the basis for investment in the energy sector, in a manner that aligns with other key objectives including the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, reducing water consumption, stimulating the local manufacturing capacity for the green economy and job creation.

Clean Energy

As a country, we are emerging from the proverbial ashes of an economy that relied heavily on fossil fuels. This is to be expected as we have an abundance of coal and we still have large reserves from which we will continue to produce both electricity and liquid fuels. Our very own Eskom was and still is one of the utilities that are heavily relying on coal to produce electricity. This abundance of coal gives us competitive advantage in that our electricity prices continue to be among the lowest in the world. This unfortunately is happening at the time when we are all concerned about the impact of global warming which emanates directly from climate change.

As government we have taken various initiatives to balance the socio-economic demands of our country with the economic and environmental challenges. Amongst these initiatives are:

- the introduction of fuel gas desulphurization technology in the Medupi and Kusile power stations that will reduce emissions and comply with the minimum requirements for such fossil-fired power stations,
- the implementation of the energy mix targets in the IRP2010,
- the introduction of the 1 million solar water geysers programme and
- energy efficiency initiatives like the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to serve as catalyst that will help us to obtain funding to implement clean energy projects.

Given that our economy is largely coal based, there is a great potential in the CDM initiatives from renewable energy, energy efficiency, cogeneration and energy generation from waste.

As we design implementation programmes of all these initiatives a number of job and business opportunities will arise. I can at this stage mention initiatives like the solar water geysers where women can participate in the installation and maintenance.

During last year, the Department worked on various interventions in order to address the funding problem and we are planning to increase the number of geysers installed this year going forward.

As we speak we have received a commitment from China to train women in the installation of solar water geysers. Once trained, these women will return to start their own enterprises or join other entrepreneurs in this area while training more women.

In April this year, the South African National Energy Development Institution, SANEDI was officially established. SANEDI has been mandated with the provision of coordinated energy research as well as energy efficiency and demand side management interventions. There are various opportunities for women's participation in the programmes and projects undertaken by SANEDI.

Last year, South Africa, represented by the Department of Energy joined eight other governments to form the Clean Energy Ministerial forum. This is a high level global forum for promoting policies and programmes that advance clean energy technology, share lessons learnt and best practice through various initiatives. One of these initiatives is the Clean Energy, Education and Empowerment Initiative (C3E), which inspires the next generation of young, female clean energy leaders through opportunities to connect with peers and mentors or role models who have risen to the top of the field, support talented young women in pursuing clean energy related studies, including through scholarships for studies in STEM fields, and provide real-life, hands-on experience through team research opportunities in partnership with leading academic institutions and industry.

I am happy to announce that we have launched C3E initiative on Saturday, 20 August 2011. The participation of women at this event was excellent and I am confident it has laid a solid basis that will increase the footprint of women in the energy sector.

Next month we will be hosting the African Energy Ministers' Conference in preparation for COP 17 in December. Through these various forums, we will be identifying and linking all initiatives that support women participation in the clean energy space. Various opportunities will be created for women participation in this space.

Electrification Programme

The Integrated National Electrification Programme (INEP), which is a flagship programme for our Department aims at 92% electrification penetration in the country by 2014. Through this programme we are focusing on access for rural areas in an attempt to improve the lives of people in those areas. On an annual basis we connect more than 150 000 house-holds nationwide. Last year alone, more than 5 000 jobs were created by the electrification programme nationwide and from which many women benefitted.

The Liquid Fuels Sector

The Liquid Fuels Charter, which was the first charter ever produced in South Africa was reviewed last year, after 10 years of existence, to determine the level of compliance by the oil industry. As we negotiate the revised terms of this charter this year, we will give more focus on the women participation targets in this area.

The awarding of petroleum licences in the department is on a points based method. Certain points are awarded for female applicants, giving women an advantage.

Liquid Petroleum Gas

Last year we introduced the regulations framework for LPG, making LPG more affordable. During the year we saved the consumer around R200m last year only. As the use of LPG in households increases, more business opportunities will be created in the distribution chain, with the hope that later we will be able to partake in the manufacturing of the gas cylinders themselves.

Integrated Energy Centres

Access to energy does not stop at the provision of an energy resource to consumers. It must also address affordability and sustainability. One of the department's initiatives to address access to energy is the establishment of the Integrated Energy Centres in rural areas. These centres are community based and run by community Co-operatives. Over and above the provision of energy sources by these centres, communities have access to skills development programmes, computer skills and income generating programmes that are integrated in the IEC.

Together with the State Owned Entities reporting to the Minister of Energy, we recognize the importance of continuing to strengthening relations with Sector Partners such as:

- Women in Oil Energy South Africa (WOESA) – an initiative of the Department that facilitates participation of women in business ventures in the gas, oil and other energy sectors;
- Women in Nuclear South Africa (WINSA) – which has a database of all women in the various nuclear related fields;
- South African Young Nuclear Professions Society (SAYNPS) – a society run and operated by young people in the nuclear field, who encourage other youth to participate in the nuclear field, and
- Many other programmes, road shows and initiatives that facilitates training and information sharing for women in energy, petroleum, gas and renewable energy including exposure to available technologies in the context of business development.

In conclusion I want to reaffirm our Department's commitment to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and meeting the Millennium Development Goals by increasing skills development and training of young people, particularly girls in science and maths and opportunities for employment and business for women in decision making positions in the energy sector.

We will be failing our people if in our policies, plans, programmes and projects, we do not prioritise the role of women in the energy sector.

I thank you.