



**ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF ENERGY, MINISTER DIPUO PETERS
AT THE 2011 NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE**

01 AUGUST 2011

To the President of the Republic;

All Ministers and Deputy Ministers present;

Members of Parliament;

Heads of Departments;

United Nations Representatives and all our International partners;

Progressive Women's Movement South Africa;

NGO sector;

Organised labour organizations;

Community Based Organisations; and

All those representing the voice of children, women, youth, older persons and
people living with disabilities,

Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocol observed

MALIBONGWE.... Igama lamaKhosikazi

Programme Director, August month 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.

In commemorating this historic month as woman leaders in government we are still committed in fulfilling what the first democratically elected President of the Republic of South Africa, President Nelson Mandela said when he addressed the first Parliament in May 1994 “***Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression***”

As government we have put in place policies and legislation that seek to address and realise this noble vision of President Mandela.

Ladies and gentlemen, someone once said...“....**strong women are those who lay a firm foundation with bricks others throw at them.**” This is a challenge to all women today, lets us not sit around and watch the pile of bricks build aimlessly around us - let us use them to build good solid foundation for our children and the future of this country.

The political empowerment of women, alone, is not enough. In our country we are not going to allow that to happen. The best area to start to move beyond these political virtues is by doing something in the areas where we are currently deployed. The role of women in the energy sector has been

underplayed for a long time. It is one of the areas in our economy where male have been allowed to dominate, unfortunately at the expense of women contribution. Economic empowerment, especially of women who are more than 50% of the population is an integral part of South Africa's transformation process, encouraging the redistribution of wealth and opportunities to previously disadvantaged communities and individuals. The empowerment process has been identified as crucial to the future viability and sustainability of the country's economy, In recognition of the importance of women in this process, last year President Zuma appointed the first Deputy Minister for the Department of Energy, my colleague, Deputy Minister Thompson, whose responsibility, amongst others, is to drive women empowerment in the energy sector. Through this, we will, amongst others, ensure that our policies, programmes and projects, clearly articulate the intended roles of women.

Our policy response to the needs 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 the changing energy needs in South Africa, the threats of climate change, and responds to the inevitable changes economically, socially and technologically and the importance of access to energy and an energy mix benefitting the designated groups, especially women as major users thereof and the mostly affected by lack of access, availability, safety and affordability of energy.

This plan represents the basis for investment in the power sector, in a manner that aligns with our objectives like 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, energy efficiency initiatives like the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to service 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, as well as even in the area of localizing the building of the geysers themselves. 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 to 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. Opportunities for women participation in the programmes and projects undertaken by SANEDI have been outlined.

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.

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 my 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.

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 the consumers. It further addressed 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 and its role being that of supporting Black Economic Empowerment of women
- Women in Nuclear South Africa (WINSA) – facilitate the acquisition of research information necessary for planning appropriate measures to realise the vision and mission of WINSA; maintain a database of all women in the various nuclear related fields; associate with the worldwide association of Women in Nuclear and contribute to public information through participation in global WIN activities.
- 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

The Department reaffirms its commitment to effective implementation of 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, mostly girls in science and maths and avail opportunities for employment and business for women indecision making position in the energy sector , which is unfortunately still male dominated; and in implementation of the outcomes of the Commission on Sustainable Development. We also commit to be part of the team and organs of state that are addressing the emerging issue of the – gender perspective on Climate Change as articulated at the 52nd Session of the UNCSW in 2008.

In its 2010, January 8 Statement, the ruling party said: *‘South Africa has ongoing problems in the energy sector that requires comprehensive solutions. The problems concerning energy are broader than the huge tariff increases we have to bear. There are issues regarding our country’s energy mix, environmental sustainability, distribution mechanisms, surcharges by local municipalities and the role of private producers to address. We would be failing our people if we do not address these urgently.’*

For us as the Department of Energy, we will be failing our people further, if in our policies, plans, programmms and projects, we do not prioritise the role of women in the energy sector.

I thank you.