

**Keynote Address by Mr Zizamele Mbambo**

**DDG: Nuclear Energy**

**2013 Women in Nuclear Global Conference**

**7 October 2013, 9:30am**

**Hyatt Regency Hotel, Rosebank**

Programme Director,

**Dr Se-Moon Park**, Women in Nuclear Global President

**Dr Margaret Mkhosi**, Women in Nuclear South Africa,

Mr Brian Dame, CEO of Eskom

Mr Phumzile Tshelane, CEO of NECSA

All other Women in Nuclear who are presidents in their respective countries

All dignitaries from various nuclear industry present and all Win Chapter Presidents,

Ladies and gentlemen

Good Morning, Goeie More, Sanibonani and a warm South African welcome to all of you.

It is with the great pleasure to be afforded an opportunity to deliver a keynote address in this remarkable conference which is attended by people of your intellect from around the globe. I was informed that this is a first time an African country hosts an annual meeting for Women in Nuclear. On behalf of the South African Government, we would like to welcome all of you and extend our appreciation for affording the country to host the meeting this year.

Firstly, I would like to emphasize that I have observed a high representation of men in other nuclear conferences, workshops and meetings as compared to women. In South

Africa, this is due to our political legacy, where the majority of our women population worked as domestic labourers in order to support their family financially.

To the contrary, I am delighted today to be around the women who took charge and be represented in this male dominated field. I believe this conference will create an opportunity to engage in frank and open discussions about how the industry can be transformed in terms of women empowerment.

Ladies and gentlemen, taking into account that women constitute a large percent of the illiterate population. In most case, the lack of information will make the public resistant and unfavourable towards nuclear technology as they regard it as dangerous. Therefore, it is very crucial to invest in empowering women through education to unlock and unleash their full potential. Educating more women in scientific field is encouraged in order to demystify nuclear energy and encourage girls to enter scientific related fields.

It is also the responsibility of women who are already in the nuclear sector to educate and communicate factual information about nuclear energy source, benefits and its drawbacks. Hence, the role of women in nuclear science and technology will raise public awareness and draw attention to the importance of nuclear energy to generate enormous electricity from a small amount of uranium fuel. Most importantly, the energy source is a base load and a carbon free that doesn't pollute the environment.

Programme Director,

Women as primary users of electricity in everyday life activities, most of them are not sure where and how electricity is formed. It is therefore key to engage them in the decision making processes about energy. As ambassadors of energy, they will be able to advance the the energy saving techniques by teaching their household members to adopt techniques such as boiling water that will be needed rather than full kettle; put the lid on the pot when cooking; and switching off the lights, computers and fans when leaving the room. With this kind of behaviour, money will be saved by families and electricity demand will reduce.

It is worth noting, that nuclear energy is not confined to electricity generation but also is used for other peaceful applications ranging from eradicating insect pests, smoke detectors to diagnosis and treatment of diseases. However these applications are less known by the public. I am so pleased to see that the theme of the conference allows the presentations of all applications of nuclear technology that address the solutions to socio-economic challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Women in the Nuclear Industry, I believe that the primary objective of this organization is transmitting information to the public to keep nuclear option alive. Therefore, in this regards, I am looking forward to see more of WiNSA members participating in debates around the nuclear expansion program. It is also encouraged that WiNSA to participate in adopt the girl child project to motivate girls particularly from the disadvantaged communities, where there is no or less representation of women in the scientific professions. These girl learners are still challenged by maths and science subjects and the project will create a platform for them to be mentored and experience the corporate companies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me also reflect on another departmental initiative, which is Clean Energy, Education and Empowerment known as C-3E. Different countries pledged to participate in this clean energy revolution to inspire women participation and change the paradigm for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. I am pleased to note that the local chapter of WiNSA is also participating in this initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen,

South Africa is in the process of expanding on its nuclear programme. This process was initially driven by at least four female leaders in the Ministry and Department of Energy, namely former Minister of Energy **Buyelwa Sonjica**, Minister Dipuo Peters, Deputy Minister Barbara Thompson and Director-General Nelisiwe Magubane. This is the type of transformative leadership that we foresee for nuclear program going forward. It is

very crucial for women involvement in the nuclear expansion program, as mentioned earlier, that women can be good ambassadors. The Department of Energy is a leading by example in that transformation issues have received a particular attention of addressing gender-specific concerns.

Lastly, I would like to wish each of you a pleasant stay in South Africa, and a successful conference that will take WinGLOBAL to further strength.

Thank you