

MINISTER OF ENERGY, MINISTER DIKOBÉ BEN MARTINS

MOTHERWELL, PORT ELIZABETH, EASTERN CAPE

SATURDAY, 8 MARCH 2014

Programme Director

Premier – Eastern Cape Provincial Government: Ms Noxolo Kiviet

Executive Mayor of NMBM: Cllr Ben Fihla

Officials of the three spheres of government

Representatives of State Owned Companies, agencies and regulators

Members of the community

Ladies and Gentlemen

I greet you all as we meet here today to take another step forward to ensure that all South Africans have access to decent and affordable electricity infrastructure and services.

Since 1994, our government, working with other stakeholders and the public has been hard at work to deliver services to the people, especially the poor in both urban and rural areas. Delivering universal access to adequate and affordable services has been uppermost on our agenda, considering the huge service delivery backlog that the ANC inherited from the apartheid government.

We inherited a system of governance that allocated resources to white areas while completely ignoring the plight of the black majority. This explains why today we still have affluent white areas and black communities existing side by side, sometimes only separated by a street.

In the last 20 years of democracy, the ANC government has made significant strides to ensure that all South Africans have access to electricity. When the ANC came to power in 1994, only 34% of South Africans had access to electricity.

Today, the number of South Africans with access to electricity is 86%. This is a significant performance considering that we were able to achieve in twenty years what successive colonial and apartheid governments could not achieve over 300 years.

Today, we are meeting here to celebrate the addition of 1810 new electrical connections completed in Motherwell NU 29 over the past three years to a total cost of R16.5 million.

We also excited about some 1900 new connections been done in Chatty Extension 12, 13, 15, and 1380.

Hon Mayor it I can be said that NMBM have been very progressive in its electricity programme and has contributed about 135 350 new connections to the total of over 5.8 million household connections since 1994 in the whole country.

I am also very pleased to hear that the Consultants that are appointed are required to inform and liaise with the relevant Ward Councillors and his/her community structures regarding the recruitment of labour in the area. The relevant Councillor is also responsible to ensure that 50 % of the labour force has to be youths between the ages of 18 to 35 years.

During the construction stage in Motherwell NU 29 a total of 6 x SMME contractors (3 x contractors for the erection of MV & LV ABC overhead lines and 3 x contractors for the installation of overhead service connections) were appointed.

These contractors gave employment to approximately 100 casuals who were recruited mainly from the respective area, which benefited from the electrification programme. The emerging contractors and their workers were supervised and trained on site by site monitoring staff to ensure that work was done in accordance with NMBM and National Standards and to minimise poor workmanship.

Presently, 100% of all contract work of the DOE electrification projects in NMBM is carried out by SMME contractors.

Programme Director,

The ANC government will continue to implement the electrification programme until all households and businesses in South Africa are connected.

The electrification backlog continues to grow despite the delivery of 5.8 million new electrification connections in the past 20 years. Informal settlements have grown at a rate of 4% annually in line with urbanization trend experienced in South Africa.

The grid electrification infrastructure cannot be extended to some of these areas because of the safety reasons. Some areas are settled in a low-lying flood and/or in areas where the ground structures is of such a nature which is not suitable for development of residential areas.

In order to achieve universal access utilizing, grid and non-grid technologies have to be implement in line with NDP Energy vision that *“more than 90 percent of the population should enjoy access to grid-connected or off-grid electricity within 20 years”*, as well as to implement Cabinet recommendation regarding the New Household Electrification Strategy which states that *“electrification of about 90% of households through grid connection and the rest with high-quality non-grid solar home systems or other possible technologies based on cost effective options in order to address current and future backlogs”*.

Over the last few years Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan municipality (NMBM) has approved a progressive renewable energy plan for the metro, which include resolutions from the Council to support households in the informal settlements with regard to non-grid electrification. NMBM has requested DOE for support in this regard and as a result the first pilot in the country will be conducted in NMBM.

Hon Mayor I can announce that NMBM was chosen for the first non-grid pilot project to the total cost of R22 million. Non-grid technologies will be utilize to supply each informal household with at least four lights, a cell phone charging point, option to power a radio and also street lights. The specific area for this implementation is still under consideration by the Metro and an announcement in this regard will be made in the near future.

Programme Director,

I wish to conclude by calling upon the community to look after the substation and other government projects. It is your responsibility to report those who steal the wires or connect to the grid illegally. Please report transgressors to the police who must deal with criminals without fear or favour.

The backlog that we inherited from apartheid remains huge. I therefore wish to further call upon all of you to pay for the electricity services to ensure that the municipalities and Eskom improve the electricity infrastructure and capacity to avoid disruptions and to connect those who are still without electricity.

We are committed to improve the lives of our people and I am confident that South Africa will have more success stories to tell in a few years' time with your involvement and support.

Working together we can take South Africa forward.

I thank you