

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS,  
HONOURABLE ZOE KOTA-FREDRICKS, MP**

**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE BEAUFORT WEST ELECTRICITY SUBSTATION,  
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE**

**Friday, 7 MARCH 2014**

Programme Director

Your Worship the Mayor of Beaufort West

Officials of the three spheres of government

Representatives of State Owned Companies, agencies and regulators

Members of the community

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to table the apology of the Minister of Energy, Honourable Dikobe Ben Martins, who could not attend this event due to urgent engagements out of the country.

The Central Karoo is the only rural developmental node in the Western Cape Province. This area has been identified by government as one of the priority areas for development.

The Department of Energy has prioritised this region for electrification as a way to improve the local economy and ensure sustainable livelihoods.

Access to electricity is a basic socio-economic right. Electricity it is central to the enjoyment of social and economic rights by all South Africans. It is difficult and inconvenient for members of the community to survive without electricity. Everything we do depends on electricity.

Other sectors of the economy such as agriculture, mining, tourism, communications and financial services need electricity to operate and provide services. The same goes for social services such as housing, health, education, safety and security.

Since 1994, 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.

The Department of Energy is aware that farming is one of the major economic activities in this area and that many farm workers do not have access to electricity. It is important that farm workers also get access to electricity.

Over the past few years, the Department of Energy, working with the municipality and Eskom, has been involved in the electrification of Beaufort West, especially the areas of Kwamandlenkosi, Rusdene, Essopville and in Murraysburg.

The growth of the population as a result of the discovery of Uranium around Beaufort West has impacted on the current electricity capacity in the area. This has necessitated more resources to be invested to upgrade the infrastructure, in order to reduce congestions and avoid disruptions, while connecting new households to the electricity grid.

In response to the needs of the community, the Department of Energy invested R60m between the 2009/10 and 2012/13 financial years. This money was used to construct the substation that we are launching today.

Twenty-five (25) direct new jobs were created during the construction of the substation, and local business has also benefited as a result of this construction of this substation.

In addition to the substation, the Department allocated also R16 million to the municipality to make new electricity connections and to build infrastructure to connect farm workers, farm schools and farms without electricity. Besides bringing

convenience to households, access to electricity is also contributing to local economic development of the towns and farming communities.

Programme Director,

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

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**