

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF ENERGY, TINA JOEMAT-PETTERSSON, AT THE OPENING PRESS BRIEFING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY CONFERENCE - 5 OCTOBER 2015

On behalf of the South African Government, I would like to welcome all of you to the South African International Renewable Energy Conference (SAIREC) 2015.

We are privileged and grateful to be hosting this important international gathering, which has attracted 3 600 delegates from 82 countries, including a number of Cabinet Ministers.

This conference, the sixth in a series of international conferences on renewable energy, first hosted in Bonn, Germany in 2004, is the first such conference to take place on African soil.

For us as a country and as a continent, hosting this conference is important, given that Africa is progressing on an economic trajectory that challenges the ability to meet our energy needs.

It is our belief that renewable energy provides a significant opportunity to improve energy access and security, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, ensure sustainable development and significantly improve socio-economic development.



As a continent we are richly endowed with natural resources to generate energy. However, aside from hydropower, renewable energy is yet to start achieving its potential in Africa.

We trust that this conference, (which is being held under the theme of ***RE-energising Africa***) will encourage countries on our continent to harness renewable energy sources, which could also contribute to developing regional electricity trade.

In South Africa, rolling out more renewable energy projects, that make the most of the energy we can generate from our proven natural resources, is no doubt an important part of the solution to our continued energy challenges.

Our renewable energy journey, which began in earnest with the release of our Integrated Resource Plan and the subsequent launch of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) in 2010, has seen Government and independent power producers make great strides towards rolling out renewable energy projects in South Africa in five short years.

To date, more than 6 000 MWh of electricity had been procured from 37 renewable-energy independent power producers.

This success in transforming natural resources into electricity on the grid is entirely due to a demonstrated political will, policy coherence,



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clear regulatory frameworks, convergence between energy generation and transmission planning, and fiscal plans.

The competitive procurement approach we followed has also helped contain electricity prices. Average prices that have been bid across all renewable technologies have declined 67.5 percent over the past five years.

As a country we have also been aware of creating opportunities for small and medium sized entrepreneurs in our renewable energy programme. Last night, at the SAIREC Welcome Cocktail Reception, I announced ten winners under the Small Projects Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Programme. The intention of the programme (for projects in the 1-5MW range) is to assist small developers to gain assistance in project development as well as in raising the necessary funding for projects of this nature.

Our renewable energy rollout has not only contributed to energy access and security and reduced emissions but, has resulted in other significant benefits.

To date, renewable energy projects in South Africa have resulted in 20 000 job years for South Africans and attracted R192.6 billion in investment. Furthermore, independent power producers have committed a total of R19.1 billion towards socio-economic



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development initiatives in communities in which they operate, contributing to livelihoods and income generation.

Children from these communities have brought the positive impact of renewable energy on this country to life through the RE-energising Africa Art competition. Over 420 artwork submissions were received from primary school children from communities where renewable energy projects have been built. Yesterday I was privileged to hand over prizes to both the winners and their schools.

By making more power available that is cost-effective and environmentally friendly, contributing to the economy, job creation and socio-economic development, renewable energy is renewing and energising South Africa in many different ways.

SAIREC 2015 gives us an opportunity to share the lessons of our country's quest to harness and transform our abundant renewable sources into energy and to chart a way forward with all like-minded countries to further advance renewable energy uptake both at home, on the continent, and around the world.

I thank you.