



Speech by

Hon Ms TM Kubayi, Minister of Energy

**at the Launch of Women in Energy Awards, held at the Inkosi Albert
Lithuli International Convention Centre, eThekweni, in South Africa,
on the 11th of August, 2017.**

Programme Director, Ms Chriselda Kananda-Dudumashe

Cllr Zama Sokhabase, Member of the Mayoral Executive Committee,
eThekweni City, representing the office of The Mayor of e Thekwini
municipality

Ms Maleho Nkomo, Deputy Chairperson of NERSA Board

Ms Anne Githuku-Shange UN Women Multi-Country Representative

Distinguished Guests,

Delegates,

Partners,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Evening.

It is a pleasure for me to be with you this evening on this occasion of launching of the women in Energy Awards to celebrate Women of Excellence during this women Month and year of OR Tambo. As Women in Energy we are united in moving South Africa forward. In this event I am proud to announce that this has been made possible by the Hon Cllr Zandile Gumede who has graciously agreed to co-host this historic event in this beautiful city.

As a country South Africa and the global community have defined and committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs have highlighted the strategic importance of gender equality. In particular, SDG 5 states that we need to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

The struggle for gender equality has been waged for a very long time and yet Statistical evidence shows that:

- Women are half of the world’s working age population but generate only 3 percent of GDP.
- Women contribute 75 percent of unpaid work.
- They earn only 73 percent of what their male counterparts earn for the same job
- 240 million additional people could be added to the workforce through higher female participation.
- More than 1 million girls are not born each year due to sex-selective abortion.
- There are only 22 women in ministerial and parliamentary roles for every 100 men.

The aforementioned indicates that there is still a lot of work to be done to advance women struggles for equality. It is in our hands to change the status quo.

Given these statistics, the SDGs mandates the global society to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities in all facets of life including at the workplace, in business, leadership at all levels of decision-making be it political, economic and public life is effected.

The energy sector is central to all our lives, businesses, economies and without energy countries cannot develop. In South Africa the energy sector is currently going through transformation driven by the emergence of new industries such as renewable energy and the gas industry. Both these developments offer opportunities for business, new entrants in the energy sector but more importantly it also contributes to the alleviation of poverty and economic growth especially in developing countries.

As South Africa, we have laws and policies empowering women, but implementation of these laws and commitments remain slow. We have to begin to rethink how we as a collective can address these imbalances. We cannot sit and continue to speak about these issues without intensifying our collective effort as women, to undertake initiatives that will place women at the Centre of mainstream economic participation and the energy sector in particular.

Equal participation of Women in the economy will benefit the global economy and also uplift communities and families. Studies have shown that boosting female labour force participation rates in sub-Saharan

Africa, Eastern and Central Asia would increase output by between 40 to 45 percent.

The distortions caused by gender discrimination call on all us as women, leaders, academics, investors and employers to take action. Concerted effort by both the private and public sector is critical in ensuring gender equality. I am pleased to note that in my Ministry action has been set in motion by the Department focusing on different initiatives ranging from legal framework to the implementation of measures to empower women in the energy sector. We have this afternoon deliberated on the draft gender strategy. I call on stakeholders from private sector and all other social partners to implement programmes and projects to empower women and promote gender equality in the energy sector from investment support, work and pay equalization and promotion of women into leadership and decision making positions. Creation of economic opportunities for women by retaining and increasing women in workplaces and promoting entrepreneurship among women is critical and should be prioritised.

I am pleased to announce that as we celebrate women's month, we are launching the Women in Energy Awards. We have thirteen awards which will be given to deserving recipients in 2018. These awards will cover women of Excellence in the energy sector and they are:-

Woman in Energy leadership Award

Woman in Liquefied Petroleum Gas Award

Woman in Petroleum Award

Woman in Renewable Energy Award

Woman in Electricity Award

Woman in Nuclear Award

Emerging Woman in Energy Entrepreneurship Award

Woman in Energy Promoter Award:

Young Women in Energy (New Entrants)

Tonight, I am pleased to give recognition to women who have made a difference in the energy sector.

Wa-thinta umfazi, wa-thintha imbokodo!

I thank you.