



Address by the Chief Director Ms Elizabeth Marabwa during the Youth in Energy Session at the Africa Energy Indaba, 04 March 2020, Cape Town International Convention Centre, Republic of South Africa.

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Panellists

CEOs of the industries

International Guests

Representatives of civil society organizations

Esteemed Guests

Members of Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address you today during this historic one day conference on the margins of the history of Africa Energy Indaba. We are Growing South Africa Together for youth in Energy empowerment. It is an honour to be here in this esteemed session and I am inspired to speak to you young, people the future of Africa. The Public – Private Discussions provide us an ideal platform to strategize on how best to contribute to unlocking “youth power” in the energy space.

Africa are the greatest asset of Africa. Africa’s youth population is expected to double to over 830 million in 2050. Africa’s population as a whole is very young with 60 percent of the entire continent aged below 25 years, making it the youngest continent in the world in relation to its population make up. The South African population is also largely made up of young people; those who are below the age of 35 years constitute about 66% per cent of the total population. Young people could support increased productivity and a stringer more inclusive economic growth across the continent.

Today, the majority of young people in Africa do not have stable economic opportunities. **Of Africa’s nearly 420 million youth, two thirds are unemployed and roughly one in six is wage employed. In South Africa youth unemployment is very high 42% of young people equal to 8.2 million are not in employment, education or training.** Africa is in danger of missing out on the full potential of its young people. This trend is definitely not good for business since unemployment is the main cause for many social unrest.

South Africa's National Youth Policy prioritizes the needs of young people with respect to education, health and well-being, economic participation and social cohesion. As part of the energy sector, it is critical that we deliberate on how to include this big part of the population, the young people who are at the heart of the future of South Africa into the energy sector. There is great benefit in investing in young people by creating pathways for accelerated development. When young people can claim their right to health, education and decent working conditions, they become a powerful force for economic development and positive change.

Energy is the catalyst for economic growth. The rapid population growth in Africa will have profound implications for the energy sector in Africa. Chief among the challenges is providing universal energy access to reliable, modern and affordable and sustainable energy. This conference focus on discussing the importance of addressing role of energy in the continent, the energy trilemma namely **Energy** security, **Energy** equity (accessibility and affordability), and **Environmental** sustainability (climate change). The need to transforming energy supply, advancing energy access, addressing affordability, improving energy efficiency and managing demand and decarbonizing the energy sector. In addressing the energy trilemma in Africa and South Africa in particular, it is critical that the energy industry contributes to economic growth in two ways. First, energy is an important sector of the economy that creates jobs and value by extracting, transforming and distributing energy goods and services throughout the economy. Second the energy industry need to extend its reach into economies as an investor, employer and purchaser of goods and services. It is in this context that the sector needs to address youth unemployment challenge in Africa.

How can South Africa energy resources are develop to maximize the benefits to the economy as a whole? What choices should government make to ensure that the sector benefits the majority, creates jobs, stimulate inclusive economic growth and redress past imbalances by including the young as well as people from historical disadvantaged communities? What role does the energy industry play to address the challenges faced by the South African youth today? What is the future of the sector and how can you position itself to take advantage of the developments in the sector? What do you, as young people, take advantage of the current opportunities in the energy sector? How do you, as youth, fit into the growing industry and also how can government better your industry reach to take advantage of this growing sector in South Africa? What is a fair and just energy transition in Africa? As young people you need to lead in the discourse of energy transition in Africa and drive the future of your economies. The energy sector should thus transition at a pace, scale and cost that is affordable to African but compatible to the environment. The trajectory should be shaped with your contribution.

Africa's energy landscape is changing, but not in a uniform direction. New discoveries of oil, gas and the emergence of renewable energy generation. The energy transition is complex and has important ramifications for the structure of economies and future development prospects and present the opportunities for investment.

As DMRE, We have chosen the youth session as one of our key priority to ensure that we empower our youths with information on the energy value chain and business opportunities the energy sector offers. The

Department is currently busy with the development of the youth policy/strategy in order to create an energy sector which integrates sustainable youth development thus contributing to skills development, economic growth, employment creation and transformation of the South African economy. The policy will strengthen and unleash the potential of the participation of youth in the energy sector; foster human capital development with a special focus on youth entrepreneurship, business management and technical skills; and cultivate culture of partnership amongst stakeholders

Programme Director

Young people should be in forefront of change and innovation, and many have the spirit to make things happen. They just need to be given the space to excel. Young people are key agents for social change, economic growth, environmental protection and technological innovation. As countries across the world continue to take bold steps towards decarbonizing their energy systems, the need to include youth in the energy transformation is becoming increasingly clear.

As today's youth you will lead the sustainable development agenda of tomorrow. It will be incumbent upon you to inject renewed momentum into the global energy and development discourse. In this regard, we have included a session on BRICS. We want our young people to participate in the global energy discourses. Mr Alexander Kormishin the BRICS Youth Energy Outlook chairperson will address us and invite you as young people to contribute to the development of the BRICS energy outlook. Our academic experts with your support will engage in this project. For our countries to prosper and thrive we must do all within our means to ensure

young people can participate in our economy in a meaningful way, whether it is in formal employment or as entrepreneurs.

The opportunity is ripe for young people who want to start their own businesses as our President has indicated during the 2020 State of the Nation Address. The government has recognised that young people lack the technical skills that can help them start their own businesses will come with intervention that will support the growth of youth entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is certainly not a panacea, but is one effective and proven way to confer identity and purpose, a sense of belonging, and hope for the future for the youth. The president also announced that the government will set aside 1% of the national budget for a youth employment initiative and a number of programmes and projects are being designed to address this national challenge. The energy sector is the engine for economic growth and should contribute to job creation in Africa.

As I conclude, I am grateful to the many experts that have come to share their knowledge, ideas and contributions. I also welcome many representatives of governments, academics private sector, industry associations and NGOs who have joined us. It is with your support and collaborative efforts that we will be able to ensure the development of our economies. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.