



**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE
MINISTER OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY
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AFRICA ENERGY WEEK

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Programme Director,

Members of the diplomatic corps

My colleagues, Ministers present here this morning

The investment community

All invited guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my singular honour to welcome you once again to this distinguished gathering aimed at “making energy poverty history by 2030”

We meet here today for the ***Africa Energy Week*** under the theme “Exploring and Investing in Africa’s Energy Future while Driving an Enabling Environment”. For the past three weeks, South Africa has been the host to energized Prime Ministers, Ministers, private sector leaders, entrepreneurs, development partners, and many others from across the world who had joined us for the Africa Oil Conference and the Windaba Conference.

We meet yet again here in Cape Town today to continue our conversation about an important subject matter for us as Africans - Energy.

Just like blood is to the body, so is energy to the economy. An economy with no energy, in particular electricity, cannot serve

the interests of any nation, and thus, is only destined to a collapse. There can be no ***Africa We Want*** without a stable economy that is based on inclusive growth, sustainable development and with universal access to energy.

Africa's growth and prosperity depends on solving the energy poverty that has engulfed the continent and thus ensure security of energy supply to her people. Lack of energy is the most critical challenge facing Africa today.

Recent statistics show that about 600 million Africans, 43% of the population, do not have access to electricity. Therefore, energy poverty is not an academic exercise in Africa, but it is our lived experience.

Whilst we are fully committed to achieving the energy trilemma balance through transitioning from high to low carbon economies, as sovereign States, we must exercise energy sovereignty and eradicate energy poverty on this continent. As African leaders, this is a commitment we must attain in our lifetime. Our people must have universal access to electricity.

Africans are suffering from energy poverty, and this has been the case for too long that we tend to forget that energy poverty is an anomaly. We must turn this abnormality around; Africa must no

longer wait. Changing this abnormality requires a greater level of commitment than ever seen before, for Africa's future depends on it. The time has come for Africans to no longer be content with small ambitions on energy. We must all rise and do more – and do so with vigour, agility, and scale.

Our indictment as leaders on this continent is to create a new energy normalcy, let us have a “New Deal on Energy in Africa”. A new deal that is people centered and guarantees continental economic growth, development, and industrialisation.

Whilst the world turns their focus on reconfiguring their energy systems to be supported by clean energy systems, Africans are still grappling with achieving universal access to energy. Despite impressive economic growth, many African countries have seen uneven progress on health, education, and energy access. As domestic resources become more critical to financing these needs, new natural resource discoveries – oil, minerals of the future, and gas – offer a new source of revenue for advancing human development and supporting countries on the path to self-sufficiency.

All of us are committed to directing new revenues from natural resources towards improving the lives of our people but several countries on this continent are finding it challenging to scale up

investments to the right level, and the contribution from extractives to socioeconomic development will remain unfulfilled unless our commitments become a significant part of our national development agendas. As governments and policymakers, we are faced with tough and complex policy choices: balancing investments into natural resources while heeding the clarion call for a just energy transition.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we grapple with these policy choices, I am reminded of one of Africa's greatest leaders, Kwame Nkrumah, who, at the launch of the OAU in Addis Ababa in 1963, said *"The resources are there, it is for us to marshal them in the active service of our people"*.

As African leaders, we must marshal these resources to deliver on a promise of universal access to energy on this continent and a promise of a prosperous Africa.

Africa is blessed not only with fossil fuels-based natural resources but is rich in renewable primary energy resources too but poor in energy supply and access.

Our continent, Africa, has potential for 11 terawatts of solar energy, 350 gigawatts of hydropower, 110 gigawatts of wind power, and an additional 15 gigawatts of geothermal potential.

Yet, the continent generates far less electricity for her people who continue to be trapped in energy poverty. This is unjustifiable and can no longer continue.

As we gather at this conference, global and developed economies are occupied with efforts to arrest increasing inflation which is largely driven by soaring oil prices and are therefore reviewing their approach to energy sovereignty and independence. This at a time when energy geopolitics is playing out in a manner that affects energy security across the globe.

In June this year, the International Energy Agency published the Africa Energy Outlook report which projects an increase in energy demand for Africa. Notably, the report acknowledges gas as critical primary energy source for South Africa to meet this demand while on the just transition journey.

The report further projects Africa's domestic demand for oil and gas to account for around two thirds of the continent's production between now and 2030. Undoubtedly, this puts pressure on the continent's energy leadership to develop well-functioning infrastructure to support Africa trading with itself.

In advancing our commitment to intra-Africa trade, we have entered into Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with

several countries on this continent, mostly on the minerals and energy sectors. These must not gather dust in our offices but must be implemented rigorously so that they serve their desired purpose in our continent.

I am pleased that we have in the room today, several young energy entrepreneurs who are blazing the trail. Today, South Africa is witnessing a rapid growth in private sector investments in the form Independent Power Projects. We note that a similar trend is emerging on the rest of the continent. However, we must ensure that Africans become active participants in these projects. We cannot sit idle and allow these projects to be wholly owned and dominated by foreign nationals.

My fellow Ministers and dear colleagues, political will is crucial in us *delivering on the universal access promised to the African populace.*

That is why we are satisfied with your strong presence with us today. Your presence and makes our voice stronger. The task is huge, but the benefits will be gigantic.

By reforming our energy systems to be more inclusive given the diverse primary energy sources at our disposal, Africa must be

able to mobilize investments to solve its energy challenge. For us to achieve this, we must work together.

As the African proverb says *“if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”*. Africa must go together in delivering the new energy deal for her people.

Our unity, Pan-Africanism must drive us towards the fulfilment of the continent’s destiny through its natural resources. This is aptly expressed in the Constitutive act of the African Union which reads *“We are inspired by the noble ideals which guided the founding fathers of our continental organisation and generations of Pan-Africanists, in their determination to promote unity, solidarity, cohesion and cooperation among the people of Africa and Africa States”*.

Let us remember these noble ideals of our forebears as we strive to develop Africa and eradicate energy poverty. Let us light up and power Africa for its prosperity depends on it.

I thank you.