Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 3
2. THE CONTEXT OF WEGE STRATEGY ........................................................................... 4
3. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE DOE WEGE STRATEGY ....................................................... 6
4. FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DOE WEGE STRATEGY ................................ 6
   4.1 Capacity Development Initiatives ............................................................................ 8
   4.2 Organizational Support Initiatives ......................................................................... 9
   4.3 Governance and Institutional Development Initiatives ......................................... 10
   4.4 Economic Growth and Development Initiatives .................................................... 11
5. REPORTING ON AND EVALUATING THE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY ............... 12
6. CONCLUSION ................................................................................................................ 12
1. INTRODUCTION

"The legacy of oppression weighs heavily on women. As long as women are bound by poverty and as long as they are looked down upon, human rights will lack substance. As long as outmoded ways of thinking prevent women from making a meaningful contribution to society, progress will be slow. As long as the nation refuses to acknowledge the equal role of more than half of itself, it is doomed to failure".

Gender Equality has always been a core value of the struggle for a democratic South Africa. This value was immediately adopted into the country's governance processes with the establishment of the new dispensation in 1994 and has been enshrined in the 1996 Constitution of South Africa. The establishment of South African Policy Framework for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE) has laid the foundation in terms of strategies government must embark on to achieve women empowerment and gender equality. WEGE is supported by the Gender Equality Strategic Framework for the Public Service which aims to facilitate the development of mechanisms and interventions by departments, DoE included, to create an enabling environment, equality of opportunities, mainstreaming of gender equality and, creating of a barrier-free workplace, illustrative of a transformed Public Sector.

Furthermore the government has signed and ratified several sub-regional, regional and international instruments for which it has to report SA progress on their implementation. Amongst these are the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, AU Protocol to the Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Millennium Development Goals (MDG), 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Beijing Platform of Action (BPA). All these instruments seek to promote women and girls human rights, women’s empowerment and gender equality. In 2016, the Department approved a DoE Policy on WEGE. The policy laid a foundation for gender equality and empowerment in the energy sector.

DoE has to take these regional and international instruments into account and include the provisions in the policy to mainstreaming gender issues in the energy sector.

It is upon this background that DoE formulate strategic framework for women empowerment and gender equality, to ensure that the department and the energy sector will be bound by

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1 Speech by President Mandela on South African Women’s Day, Pretoria, 9 August 1996
the provisions of the strategy and implement them; to achieve women empowerment and gender equality. The responsibility to implement this provision lies with every manager in the department and the energy sector as a whole. The strategy implementation cuts across all activities of the department from policy and regulation formulations, implementation and awareness. Women Empowerment and Gender Equality is everyone’s business and everyone’s responsibility.

2. THE CONTEXT OF WEGE STRATEGY

Women make up more than half the population and electorate in South Africa. Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle enshrined in the South African constitution, policies, laws and regulations. This is also in line with international norms and standards to which South Africa subscribe. The DoE Gender Policy and this strategy promotes and enshrines the equality of women and men in all areas including but not limited to employment, work and pay, and adoption of measures to provide for specific advantages in favour of women, young women and women with disabilities and girl children.

While the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, energy and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.

A research by McKinsey & Company points out that advancing woman equality can add $12 trillion to global growth or increase annual global gross domestic product by one percent. It is estimated that women constitutes half of the world working age population. They however, generate only 37 percent of gross domestic product. In general, women dominate in unpaid work, contributing 75 percent of unpaid work, work fewer hours than men and mostly in part-time jobs and are disproportionately represented in lower paying jobs. Bridging these gender gaps and achieve parity will benefit the world economy including our African continent. The study estimates that boosting female labour force participation rates in sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern and Central Asia would increase output by between 40 to 45 percent.

1 McKinsey & Company entitled the Power of Parity (September 2015)
This is supported by Statistic SA study, Gender Series Volume 1 on Economic Empowerment (2001 – 2014) which revealed that despite South Africa’s excellent policy and program intervention framework that supports women’s economic empowerment, the gender gap with respect to achieving gender equity in economic transformation, continues. The labour force participation rate of males was higher than that for females in both 2001 and in 2014. Therefore no major changes in the gap between male and female participation over the 13-year period. The same trend is observed with employment rate, that males has been consistently higher than that of females and a considerable large number of males continued to occupy all leadership positions in government, private sectors and higher education compared to females 3.

While significant progress has been made, South African women continue to face serious inequality and disadvantage in a wide range of spheres: in Government, in business, in their communities and their homes. These disadvantages are further complicated by unequal gender relations within the categories of race, class, disabilities, sexual orientation, religion and geographical location.

NDP has elevated the role of energy in the country’s economic growth and development. This role, as envisaged, ensures that by 2030 South Africa has an energy sector that promotes economic growth and development, social equity through expanded access to energy services and environmental sustainability through efforts to reduce pollution and mitigate the effects of climate change. To realize this vision, South Africa’s energy systems need to be supported by effective policies, institutions, governance systems; regulation and competitive markets. The NDP thus mandate government, DoE included to alleviate energy poverty and promotion of gender equality. It is within this context that DoE WEGE strategy is developed. This mandate entails significant investments and opportunities in the energy sector across all energy value chain.

Overall, it may be concluded that energy interventions can contribute to women’s empowerment and to achieving greater gender equality. It is also important to note that addressing the challenge of access to clean, affordable, sustainable energy is an opportunity to progress climate justice principles such as the right to develop and sharing the benefits and burdens equitably. The envisaged growth and expansion of the energy sector and major opportunities will be created and new energy industries developed, women and youth participation must be at the core of these changes.

3. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE DOE WEGE STRATEGY

The objective of the strategy is to facilitate the development of mechanisms and interventions by DoE for the creation of an enabling environment, equality of opportunities, mainstreaming of gender equality and creating of barrier-free workplace, illustrative of a transformed energy sector. This strategy will therefore act to protect human rights of both men and women, guide the department on how to be gender responsive; influence all policies, procedures, structures and practices in order to accelerate promotion of gender equality, gender justice, non-discrimination as well as to promote transparent and good governance.

In a nutshell, the strategy will serve as a vehicle to transform the department and the energy sector as whole towards gender equality. The strategy will focus on external stakeholders to DoE and Internal officials of DoE.

4. FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DOE WEGE STRATEGY

The DoE Strategy is based on four set of key pillars, described as strategic pillars as espoused from the DPSA Gender Equality Framework. Four operational (process) pillars or initiatives which cut across all four strategic pillars forms the basis on which implementation of strategy is premised will ensure the emancipation, empowerment, development and advancement of women, including women with disabilities and youth in the energy sector; see Figure 1. The framework is based on the WEGE vision to “to create a transformed, inclusive energy sector that is free of discrimination, inequalities and barriers to self-reliance”.

The four strategic pillars are:

- Enabling environment;
- Equity;
- Gender Mainstreaming; and
- Barrier free workplace
The four operational (process) pillars or initiatives are:

- Capacity development initiatives;
- Organizational support initiatives;
- Governance and institutional development initiatives; and
- Economic growth and development initiatives.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
4.1 Capacity Development Initiatives

Department of Energy should ensure that a wide set of options for capacity development are adopted in order to achieve women empowerment and gender equality for the creation of a non-sexist sector/state. Human Capital must be built and strengthened efficiently and effectively, with the infrastructure put in place to promote ease access. Strengthening/building capacity of women, including women with disabilities and young women in order to render them independent, employable, skilled and able to take up positions in decision-making levels effectively and business opportunities as Entrepreneurs in the Energy Sector is one of the core objectives of the policy. The following initiatives and actions are recommended:

- Development of capacity through training of gender champions, who will be able to implement the strategy in the department and energy sector in line with superior national, regional and international instruments;
- Development of pathway for upward mobility of women into Senior Management Positions through leadership development management programme.
- Building of capacity in women for different levels through bursaries, traineeships, learnership, mentoring and coaching and skills development;
- Creation of capacity to mainstream gender issues into all programmes and projects of the department through Gender Mainstreaming Training Programme to all officials. This to include gender empowerment training as part of orientation programme for new employees;
- Development of programmes on economic empowerment and poverty alleviation for women through promotion of universal access to energy. These include the business opportunities in the energy sector workshops for women and other energy related programmes; and
- Gender training should form part of a wider capacity-building strategy that includes post training activities, monitoring systems and organisational changes.
4.2 Organizational Support Initiatives

The Department of Energy should ensure that wide set of options for organizational support are adopted in order to promote women empowerment and gender equality. The initiative requires appropriate and effective structures and processes for allocating and managing assigned responsibilities. The appropriate and efficient operational systems will promote effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the goal of gender equality. The following initiatives and actions are recommended:

- The Department should ensure provisioning of adequate resources (human capital & financial), with a view to create appropriate attitudes and sensitization for women advancement and gender equality in the energy sector. The principle of gender budgeting to be implemented;
- DoE and SoE’s should develop a pathway for upward mobility of women into senior management positions through establishment of leadership pipeline and leadership development management programmes such as emerging, accelerated and advanced/ executive management development programme to fast track gender parity in key decision-making levels and 50% of women in SMS;
- Development of opportunities through measures such as bursaries, traineeships, learnerships, mentoring, coaching and skills development for building skills and capacity in women of different levels in the energy sector;
- Measures such as affirmative action, women managers’ forum, to fast track the increase of women (including women with disabilities) in SMS level and in the employment in general in place;
- Programmes for economic empowerment and employment creation in relation to the mandate of universal access to energy in place towards eradication of poverty and wealth creation;
- Programmes such as awareness, educational and economic empowerment for young women, girl/ boy child, elderly, military veterans and rural women in relation to the mandate of universal access to energy in place;
- DoE and Energy Sector should support the formation of women business cooperatives in the programme of Integrated Energy Centre;
- DoE and Energy Sector should promote affirmative procurement policies and practices in the energy sector;
- DoE and Energy Sector should ensure that a considerable percentage of most Supply Chain Management contracts are granted to women. Furthermore, monitor
the procurement trends and patterns through the development of women business owner supplier database;

- DoE and Energy shall provide business opportunities to companies, organisations and individuals that support women empowerment and the eradication of gender inequality while excluding those that are not supporting this human right and developmental framework;
- DoE to facilitate women in energy awards;
- DoE to facilitate and maintain the Women in Energy Directory to strengthen database of women in the energy sector; and
- Affirmative action to be implemented on SME post until 50/50 representation is achieved.

4.3 Governance and Institutional Development Initiatives

The department of Energy should ensure that gender policy and strategy is promoted, governed and supported by strategic leadership. There must be interventions to ensure implementation, and to track progress, promote quality, integrity and impact assessment. All these cannot materialise without proper oversight, governance and policy guidance. The following initiatives and actions are recommended:

- DoE should ensure that HoD’s 8-Principle Action Plan for promoting WEGE is institutionalized through capacity building and including them on in performance agreements for senior managers;
- DoE and Energy Sector should promote gender responsive policy and practices in the energy sector;
- DoE should ensure that gender is incorporated to all departmental policies, programmes and projects;
- Accountability of gender mainstreaming through M&E, reporting, gender audits, disaggregated data, gender analysis of gender mainstreaming to be placed at the highest level. This will help with better planning that incorporates gender perspectives;
- DoE should ensure that Gender Management System (GMS) and institutional mechanisms are established. These will include establishment of gender units with dedicated gender focal points at the appropriate management level, establishment of gender forum, appointment of gender champions, etc.;
- DoE to facilitate the establishment of Women in Energy associations;
• DoE must ensure that there is 50% representation of women at all SMS levels and that all HR policies are mainstreamed to accommodate the principles of non-sexism, and employment equity for all; and
• Targeted/ special measures and programmes such as Affirmative Action and women managers forums must be put in place to increase women representation, including women with disabilities in the employment in general and SMS level;

4.4 Economic Growth and Development Initiatives

The DoE should develop programmes and initiatives in skills enhancement and capacity development to address the low skills base particularly in women in the energy sector, and those who intend to join the sector. The programmes will increase access to opportunities for, economic empowerment of women and alleviating energy poverty amongst women. The following initiatives and actions are recommended:

• DoE should assess level of women participation on all energy programmes and projects in both private and public sector with a view to align and mainstream both internal and external programmes and projects towards economic empowerment of women;
• DoE must develop partnership with national and international organizations and be responsive to agreements on economic development with special focus women;
• Economic development programmes targeting young women, girl children, elderly women, military veterans, rural women and women with disabilities aiming at poverty reduction and economic empowerment in place;
• DoE together with SoEs should establish stakeholder partnership and collaborate with strategic partners in promoting economic and educational empowerment for women in the energy sector.
• DoE and SoEs should develop energy programmes and projects focusing on women, from disadvantaged communities including those from rural areas, girl child and women with disabilities towards eradication of household poverty and creation of economic opportunities.
• DoE and partners should facilitate access to cross cutting issues such as information, finance, capacity and opportunities
5. REPORTING ON AND EVALUATING THE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

PPMO will be required to prepare annual reports on the implementation of Gender policy to the Minister on implementation outcome and the report will cover progress in implementing the strategy results, including concrete examples and transformative stories based on the baseline developed.

PPMO should measure and report progress on women penetration and participation in the energy sector through a detailed study conducted industry wide. Such a study should be conducted every three years with initial study setting a baseline for each energy lever in both public and private sector. The PPMO will collect, analyse and disseminate at both sector sector and specific energy sector level comprehensive, comparable and reliable data on the subject of gender equity, mainstreaming, empowerment, gender gaps, and women participation in all facets of the energy sector. Regular review of progress achieved on critical areas identified in the policy and this strategy document. PPMO will ensure that gender policy and strategy are implemented. Adopt, maintain and enhance targeted measures to increase the representation of women in all spheres of the energy sector including academic and research institutes, consultants and business.

6. CONCLUSION

Women make up more than half the population and electorate in South Africa. Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle enshrined in the South African constitution, policies, laws and regulations. This is also in line with international norms and standards to which South Africa subscribe. The DoE Gender Policy and this strategy promotes and enshrines the equality of women and men in all areas including but not limited to employment, work and pay, and adoption of measures to provide for specific advantages in favour of women, young women and women with disabilities and girl children. Women participation in decision making in the energy sector is critical to drive the gender agenda in the sector and increasing capacity for women to participate in decision making and leadership is critical. Progress on gender empowerment and gender equity and mainstreaming is important. The PPMO is expected to prepare an annual report presenting progress towards achievement of the strategy expected results, changes in gender parity, and institutional effectiveness. An independent report should be conducted every five years to monitor effectiveness of strategy.