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MEDIA RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY CONFERENCE OPENS IN CAPE TOWN

CAPE TOWN, October 5, 2015 – Attracting 3 600 delegates from 82 countries, the South African International Renewable Energy Conference was officially opened by the South African Minister of Energy, Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson, in Cape Town today.

The sixth in a series of International Renewable Energy Conferences (IRECs), first held in Bonn, Germany in 2004, SAIREC is the first such conference to take place on African soil.

The conference, which is being attended by government delegations, business leaders and members of civil society, aims to advance renewable energy globally in order to achieve a global energy transition.

Welcoming the delegates, the Minister of Energy said:

“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. We trust that this conference will encourage countries on our continent to harness our significant renewable energy sources, which could also contribute to developing regional electricity trade. 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.”

Minister Joemat-Pettersson noted that rolling out more renewable energy projects is an important part of the solution to the country’s continued energy challenges. She highlighted the successes of South Africa’s renewable energy programme to date, which has seen more than 6 000 megawattshours of electricity procured from 37 renewable energy independent power producers over the last five years. The programme has also



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resulted in other significant benefits for the country in terms of job creation, investment and socio-economic development.

The Minister also used the conference welcome reception as an opportunity to announce ten preferred bidders in the Small Projects Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme. The programme, which is for projects in the 1MW-5MW range, has been designed to create opportunities for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs.

School children were also recognised for the role they have played in bringing the positive impact of renewable energy to 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. The winners and their schools received monetary prizes from the Minister at the welcome reception.

“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,” Minister Joemat-Pettersson said.

South Africa’s Department of Energy is hosting SAIREC 2015 in conjunction with the South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI) and the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21) with support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

“SAIREC comes at a time when an energy transition towards renewables is accelerating world-wide thanks to advances in renewable energy technologies, increases in capacity and rapid cost reductions. On the African continent South Africa is leading the way with its Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) and is, therefore, the ideal host for such an international gathering,” said REN21 Chair Dr. Arthouros Zervos.



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“It is our sincere hope that SAIREC will serve as a catalyst for renewables both on the African continent and globally, helping to meet the energy needs for all. The *SADC Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Report*, released at SAIREC, provides a sound basis for political decision makers and investors to foster the rapid deployment of renewables in the region, thereby providing access and unleashing socioeconomic development,” added Dr. Zervos.

Under the theme, RE-energising Africa, delegates at SAIREC will have the opportunity to discuss the renewables value chain, regulatory frameworks for a transition to renewables, how to improve energy access with renewables, advances in renewables in energy smart cities, in transport and eco-mobility and more. Plenary and parallel sessions, side events and an accompanying exhibition provide opportunities for delegates to discuss, learn and network.

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