



Keynote Address by the Minister of Energy, Ms Dipuo Peters, MP, on the occasion of the 5.6 millionth switch-on

06 June 2013, Ikhutseng Sports Ground, Warrenton

Programme Director

The Deputy Minister of Energy Ms B Thomson;

Madam Premier of the Northern Cape, Ms Sylvia Lucas;

MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, Mr. Alvin Botes

Mayor of Frances Baard District Municipality, Ms MM Moloji;

Mayor of Magareng Local Municipality, Me Elizabeth Manopole;

Government officials from different spheres of Government;

Representatives of Eskom;

The people of Ikhutseng and Magareng;

Dumelang Bagaetsho. Goeie More. Good morning to all of you!

In his address, during a Parliamentary debate marking his 100 days in office as the first democratically elected President, Seaparankwe Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela reaffirmed citizens of the ANC Government's commitment to the betterment of people's lives and said, and I quote:

"At the end of the day, the yardstick that we shall all be judged by is one and one only; that is, are we, through our endeavours here, creating the basis to better the lives of all South Africans"

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This historic event bears testimony to the strides we have made as this Government in the betterment of people's lives, particularly through electricity provision.

The community of Ikhutseng is gathered here today to witness the 5.6 millionth symbolic switch-on, which is indicative of all efforts aimed at ensuring access to electricity. This milestone calls for celebration.

Since the democratic Government came into office in 1994, we managed to electrify more than 5.6 million houses that were previously without electricity. Only 36% of households had access to electricity in 1994, today as I am standing here about 85% households have access to electricity.

Access to energy is the golden thread that connects economic growth, increased social equity, and an environment that allows the world to thrive.

Yet the truth is that, in general, development is not possible without energy, and sustainable development is definitely not possible without sustainable energy.

Energie is van kritieke belang in die verbetering van die welsyn van die armes wat dit nodig het om te kook en beligting, verhitting van water, vervoer en die produksie van goedere en dienste.

(Energy is critical in improving the well-being of the poor who need it for cooking and lighting, heating water, transportation and the production of goods and services.)

Energy access affects the quality of life by contributing to better public services, such as health care and education, and improving the possibilities for income generation and employment.

The national backlog is now standing at about 2,5 million according to the latest statistics. There are still households that have access to electricity illegally and these we will also legalize through formal connections and meters.

Our presence here at this memorable event will surely contribute, in a humble way, to the genuine desire of this Government to improve access and the delivery of services to all.

Die ANC Regering is hard aan die werk strewende om ongelykhede van die verlede aan te spreek. Dit sluit in die bekendstelling van elektrisiteit aan die 15% huishoudings wat nog steeds sonder elektrisiteit.

(The ANC Government is hard at work striving to address inequalities of the past. This includes the roll out of electricity to the 15% households that are still without electricity.)

We remain committed to increasing access to modern energy in the fastest possible way. To this end, we intend to implement the universal access strategy incorporating grid and off-grid solutions in order to achieve universal access to electricity by 2025.

In the medium term, we intend to roll out a comprehensive energy solution in both informal and new housing developments incorporating grid, non-grid electricity, solar water heating and LP Gas for formal dwellings. For informal settlements, this will involve LP Gas for thermal needs plus a PV-technology solution for lighting and small power.

Programme Director,

Die Noord-Kaap, veral die landelike dorpe; is verwaarloos deur die vorige apartheidsregering. Die Departement van Energie, het as deel van die Regering se fokus op landelike ontwikkeling geprioritiseer elektrifisering agterstand in al die provinsies.

(The Northern Cape province, especially its rural towns; have been neglected by the previous Apartheid Government. The Department of Energy, as part of Government's focus on rural development has prioritized electrification backlogs in all the provinces.)

We are contributing to the collective effort to implement the national climate change response strategy, the Green Economy Accord and the NDP's move to less carbon intensive electricity production through procurement of renewable energy sources.

We have been implementing our groundbreaking Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPP). The programme aids in the generation of energy using renewable energy sources.

Since the release of the Request for Proposals for this programme, we have announced the preferred bidders for Windows One and Two of the programme, representing in excess of 2460 MW of power, worth a total investment of R 72 billion in the energy sector of the country.

Most importantly, because renewable energy sources are spread across the country, and it is also been implemented in the Northern Cape Province, with 21 of the total 47 projects already been announced for this province. Hence, this province is correctly been referred to as the area which have found the “sun diamond” and is not any more the home of the Kimberley diamonds.

In as much as the ANC Government is determined to ensure energy access to all households in South Africa, financial and technical constraints persist and delay such ambitions.

The Integrated National Electrification Programme receives an allocation of R3.8 billion. Eskom and municipalities will receive R 2.1billion and R1.6 billion respectively. We are confident of delivering 220 000 new connections in this financial year.

It is also important to take note of the fact that except for the project we officially switched-on today, the Government also dedicated funding to the tune of R8 Million to improve the electricity network and to eradicate the backlog in Marageng in the next two years. Planning of these projects will commence soon.

However, irrespective of the current electrification projects, there are still about 1 000 households without electricity and we are working closely with Eskom and the Municipality of Magareng to address these backlogs to ensure 100% access to electrification of this Municipality.

Each and every resident of this and other communities has a responsibility to ensure that all electrical wires and infrastructure that has been provided is well taken care of.

Allow me to also state on the onset that the entire community has a huge responsibility in preventing and addressing cable theft. Such illegal acts undermine all Government efforts and are a reversal of gains made in electrification.

As jy sien die mense peuter of die steel van jou drade rapporteer dit dadelik aan die SAPD. Daarbenewens kan die Munisipaliteit en Eskom nie herstel of gradeer jou drade en maak seker dat daar elektrisiteit in die drade as jy nie volle verantwoordelikheid te neem in die betaling vir die elektrisiteit wat verbruik word.

(If you see people tampering or stealing your wires please report them immediately to the SAPS. In addition, the Municipality and Eskom cannot repair or upgrade your wires and make sure that there is electricity in the wires if you do not take full responsibility in paying for the electricity that is consumed.)

Programme Director,

It will be unfair of me not to urge all consumers in the country to use energy efficiently, we cannot invest billions of rands in energy generation and processing plants and we are not more energy efficient conscious. Switch off all appliances that are not needed to be on.

In closure, we are on an irreversible path towards improving the lives of our people and I am confident that we shall have even more success stories to tell in a few years' time. This Government will make sure that everyone in South Africa has access to electricity by 2025.

Our people have been ushered from a season of despair, to that of hope. As Madiba said in his inaugural speech,

"The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement".

Kea leboga. Thank you. Dankie