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Department:  
Energy  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

***Immediate Release***

**Media Statement**

**President Zuma confident of the Department of Energy's "Turnkey" electricity approach to reach universal access**

***Mthatha, 14 May 2011*** – President Jacob Zuma and Minister of Energy Dipuo Peters have officially launched a multimillion electricity project in the rural area of Engcobo, Mthatha in the Eastern Cape.

Speaking to about 10 000 people from surrounding areas in Engcobo, President Zuma said the government of the Republic of South Africa made a commitment that it will ensure that all communities, households, clinics and schools have electricity by the year 2014, and that "we are still on track to meet that target".

He said one of the challenges in electrification projects over the last few years, was that only municipality which were licensed to distribute electricity were allocated electrification funding. However, in order to increase the roll-out process, the Department of Energy initiated the "Turnkey" projects with the municipalities that are not licensed.

The "Turnkey" approach is a recommended alternative to in-house electrification done by the Municipalities or Eskom in the light of the pressures and limitations that these entities have.

"The electrification programme is currently faced with a huge backlog. Furthermore, most of the municipalities which are not licensed are in rural areas and are often faced with challenge of shortage of skills, especially technical skills, human resources, and limited time to manage electrification projects. "In light of the issues mentioned, the "Turnkey" projects provide a solution to fast-tracking service delivery, and producing a good quality product that is produced by qualified and experienced experts in the field, while knowledge transfer is taking place in the municipality," the President said.

Minister Peters said the Engcobo was one of the areas that benefitted from the "Turnkey" projects. Since Engcobo is not licensed to distribute electricity, the Department of Energy assisted its municipality to bring electricity to its constituency.

“The Engcobo Municipality electrification project is the largest undertaken by the Department in the country. The number of un-electrified households in Engcobo was about 11 500, and after July, another 5000 un-electrified households from the areas of Ntsika Yethu Municipality will be added to the list.

“During the last two financial years, Government, through the Department of Energy has spent R150 million to bring electricity in this region alone. This resulted in over 8 330 households receiving electricity. The first phase of Engcobo cost R110.5 million. The “Turnkey” projects resulted in 5 625 whilst the Eskom projects resulted in another 2 700 new connection in this area,” Minister Peters said.

The proceedings of the day started with the President and the Minister officially opening a R130 million electricity Sub-station funded by Eskom as well as visiting a local clinic where CEF donated a solar geyser.

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**Media Enquires**

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