

Press Statement

16 February, 2007

South Africa joins forces with International Energy Agency

South Africa is set to play a more meaningful role in international energy affairs with the launch of the new South African National Energy Research Institute (SANERI) and the first energy technology collaboration workshop with the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The Minister of Science and Technology, Hon. M. Mangena, is expected to open the event on Tuesday, 20th February 2007. More than 20 international and 100 local high-level stakeholders are expected to engage in a comprehensive exchange on the status of selected energy technologies (including solar heating and cooling, wind energy development but also increasing efficiency of conventional power plants). Possible areas for future joint action will be explored.

IEA Executive Director Claude Mandil welcomed this important initiative, saying: "International collaboration on technology is crucial to enable all countries to meet their objectives for energy policy. We need to fully engage major developing countries. The IEA energy technology network has a big part to play. I am delighted that South Africa and our NEET Initiative were able to organise this first meeting."

The IEA has created a new energy technology outreach programme called NEET (Networks of Expertise in Energy Technology). The NEET Initiative is implementing the request from the Group of Eight (G8) to link the IEA technology network with the five rapidly growing economies of Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa. The G8 is the international forum for the governments of the eight countries representing about 65 percent of the world's economy. The IEA international energy technology network involves more than 5 000 high level experts from governments, industry and research institutions.

The three-day NEET workshop which will take place in Johannesburg from 20 to 22 February 2007, is supported by the international Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), and the South African Fossil Fuel Foundation (FFF).

The eve of the workshop, Monday 19 February 2007, will also see the official launch of SANERI, a state-funded research company housed under CEF (Pty) Ltd, a public company involved in the search for appropriate solutions to meet the future energy needs of South Africa, the Southern African Development Community and sub-Saharan region.

SANERI has been given the task of stimulating the culture of innovation in energy research and development. At the launch, the Ministers of the two portfolios to which SANERI reports - Minerals & Energy and Science & Technology - are expected to reiterate the South African government's commitment to investigating sustainable energy options for the country and advancing the country's competitive position in energy technology development through research, as well as human capital development in the energy sector.

The NEET workshop is the first in a series of workshops to be held in emerging economies with the aim of expanding the international network of energy researchers, industries and policy makers, helping to address challenges in future sustainable energy supply.

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