

Press Statement

South Africa and International Energy Agency workshop successfully concludes

SANERI, the new South African National Energy Research Institute, and the International Energy Agency (IEA) have concluded their first energy technology collaboration workshop. The workshop was one of the activities initiated by the G8 Gleneagles summit in 2005, also attended by South Africa as well as Brazil, China, India and Mexico.

The G8 (Group of Eight) is the international forum for the governments of the eight countries representing about 65 percent of the world's economy. They have supported the IEA to take action to better link the IEA's technology network with the five rapidly growing economies represented at Gleneagles. For this purpose, the IEA has created an outreach programme called NEET (Networks of Expertise in Energy Technology).

South Africa has taken the lead in organizing a first workshop together with the IEA's NEET Initiative to facilitate a comprehensive exchange about programmes and to explore opportunities for strengthening international ties. Kadri Nassiep, CEO of SANERI summed up by saying: "this was a great opportunity to share our national approaches and results with other international experts and to explore areas where strengthened international links could help address our national concerns. It was interesting to see that other countries around the globe are facing similar challenges and it is very encouraging that other international groups are so open to sharing their findings with South Africa. We will explore further ways to strengthen our international ties. I am convinced that this will help us to accelerate our technological progress and implement appropriate policies."

Mr. Mangena, Minister of Science and Technology, opened the event on Tuesday, 20th February 2007. More than 100 South African key stakeholders and 20 international experts spent three days exchanging information about their various programmes. Solar, wind, hydropower, cleaner fossil fuel power production, improving energy efficiency, demand side management, information dissemination and energy modelling have been addressed, and possible areas for future joint action have been explored.

Neil Hirst, Director for Technology at the IEA said, "I am delighted that we have identified many areas of mutual benefit for closer cooperation between South Africa and the IEA's energy technology network. We expect this will lead to a much closer relationship for the future, including full membership for South Africa in a growing number of our international energy technology collaboration agreements."

IEA's collaborative programmes, the Implementing Agreements, have issued invitations to South African stakeholders to mutually share expertise and join forces with the IEA's energy technology network of several thousand high level experts from governments, industry and research institutions.

The three-day NEET workshop took place in Johannesburg from 20 to 22 February 2007. Support was also given by the international Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), and the South African Fossil Fuel Foundation (FFF).

Back to back with this workshop, SANERI was officially launched by Minister Mangena on Monday 19 February 2007. SANERI, a state-funded research company, will be 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.

The South African IEA NEET workshop was 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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