

PRESS RELEASE

ENERGY IN AFRICA WAITING TO BE UNTAPPED

Africa has a wealth of resources that has the potential to supply the entire continent's needs – and beyond - according to Brian Statham, chairperson of The South African National Energy Association (SANEA), who will also be chairing the Energy INDABA 2010. However, he says, African businesses are yet to make the most of this potential.

With an abundance of oil in Nigeria, oil and gas reserves in Angola, and large quantities of coal in Southern Africa, Africa has rightfully positioned itself on the global energy map for rich power resources.

However, when considering energy projects, Africa needs to choose technologies that are not simply state-of-the-art, but also easy to operate and maintain in the continent's context. “ All too often developers fail to realise that these [energy] projects will be located in places remote from maintenance facilities, and where there are few people with high levels of technical skills. This may make it both difficult and costly to achieve the levels of performance normally expected from these modern technologies,” explains Statham.

However herein lies the major opportunity for Africa's energy sector. “Instead of importing unsuitable technology from wealthy countries, the African energy sector should manufacture – or ‘Africanise’ its own technology,” explains Statham. “There is a great need to encourage innovative design, manufacturing and project implementation of this kind so that the continent can serve its own needs.”

The creation of uniquely African technology has the added potential of investment opportunities. “Developing countries such as in Latin America and parts of Asia are also experiencing similar problems as Africa, such as impoverished areas and underdeveloped resources. But by developing technologies suitable for these circumstances, we will create jobs, empower the entrepreneurial spirit and extend the African footprint across the developing world. More importantly, we will move from a condition of dependence to one of independence, able to meet our own needs for energy and unlocking all the social and economic benefits that follow.”

Yet for success in energy to be possible, countries on the continent need to work together. “Instead of a South African or Malawian energy solution, the energy sector in Africa should unite to create a common solution that corresponds to the African environment and its needs,” explains Statham. “Only when Africa and its people start looking after themselves, can we realise the great investment and business potential that lies ahead.”

Statham will be chairing the second Africa ENERGY INDABA 2010 - A Time for Innovation, Solutions and Alternatives, between February 24-26, 2010. The conference and exhibition brings together high-level

decision makers from the private sector, government, energy companies, and utilities, to develop a common strategy for Africa's energy sector.

"By working across national boundaries to find ways to exploit Africa's physical energy, we will find solutions to unleashing the human potential on this continent," emphasises Statham.

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About ENERGY INDABA 2010 - A Time of Innovation, Solutions and Alternatives is a flagship African energy event with a specific focus on exploring solutions for a new energy future for Africa. With the recent ever increasing world-wide attention to energy, ENERGY INDABA 2010 provides an ideal platform to encourage debate and networking to promote sustainable development initiatives across the African continent.

DATES: 24 – 26 February 2010

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