

Africa's energy lies untapped



African businesses are yet to make the most of the continent's potential to **supply** more than just its own energy needs, South African National Energy Association (SANEA) chairperson Brian Statham said on Monday.

Statham, who is chairing the Energy Indaba **2010**, said 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.

But when considering energy projects, Africa needs to choose technologies that are not just state-of-the-art but also easy to operate and maintain.

"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," said Statham.

This is where he believes there is a 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," he suggested.

"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," he said.

The creation of uniquely African technology has the added potential of **investment** opportunities. Developing countries in Latin America and parts of Asia are also experiencing similar problems to 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," Statham said.

<http://www.moneybiz.co.za/africa/africa.asp?story=c1074854-341b-4ba6-b499-90ebcefe3c21#>