

Welcome Address by Mayor Zandile Gumede at Women in Energy Inaugural Awards Occasion Held At Durban ICC

Programme Director, Ms Criselda Kananda-Dudumashe

Hon Ms MT Kubayi, Minister of Energy,

Dr Ingrid Tuvfesson, Chairperson, SANEDI Board,

Ms Nomfundo Maseti, Piped Gas Regulator, NERSA

Ms Anne Githuku-Shange UN Women Multi-Country Representative

Distinguished Guests,

Delegates,

Partners,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening and welcome,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this wonderful and beautiful city of Durban on this special evening function. We are blessed to be the first city to host this inaugural awards ceremony. I must also mention that we were also honoured by co-hosting a national women in energy dialogue that was attended by various government departments, private companies, businesses, associations, state own entities, individual companies, members of the civil society and general public.

You can tell that this women led Department of Energy has done considerable work to promote women economic empowerment in the

energy sector over the last three years through business opportunities in the energy sector for women, development of Department of Energy Policy on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality, declaration from the Women in Energy Business Summit 2016 and Women in Energy Directory.

We want to see the continuation of programs such as energy dialogue which is designed to aid the increase in economic participation, leadership and development of women involved in energy space. We really appreciate the platform that is provided for women to network, share their knowledge, experience's, achievements and challenges for noting by the Minister.

The fact remains that women in South Africa have not accessed economic opportunities available in the country. It is therefore, imperative, that women as a collective strategically focus on Women's empowerment issues to ensure control and access to economic opportunities offered in the energy sector in South Africa. We want to thank the Minister of Energy for hosting a dialogue, as the Mayor, I have also accepted to co-host because I consider economic empowerment of women and gender equality a priority in this country. As a women and a mother, I believe that we can achieve a lot if we work together as women. We will be able have more women who are leading in business, provinces, in politics and including having a series of women presidents.

As we celebrate the month dedicated to women, we are so excited about the awards ceremony this evening. Women's month is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on women's achievements, as well

as the problems they have faced in the struggle to be free and the important role they continue to play in society.

Opportunities are abound in the different energy sectors namely renewable energy, energy efficiency, electricity, nuclear, oil, gas and special projects such as the solar water heater projects. Renewable energy, energy efficiency and nuclear are relatively new areas of business where substantial investments are currently being directed and these offer viable opportunities.

With those few words, I would like to welcome you to this wonderful and beautiful city and Province of Kwazulu Natal. This is just the beginning of greater things to come. Women need to take bold and decisive steps towards economic emancipation, empowerment and social development ushered by opportunities presented. This is your time; make a difference to your life, and seize these opportunities presented.

Namukelekile eThekwini.

I thank you.