

Renewable energy sector engages with DMRE

Energy sector stakeholders recently met with Minister Gwede Mantashe, in what is viewed as a significant step towards the sector forging a positive relationship with the Department of Mineral Resource and Energy (DMRE), based on trust and improved communications.



Nombifuthi Ntuli, CEO, Sawea

The purpose of the engagement was to establish a forum where the renewable energy sector can have a platform to engage the DMRE on a regular basis. The meeting raised a number of interesting points that included: South Africa's commitment to move towards a low carbon economy, in line with the Paris Agreement, as well as the role of energy as a significant catalyst of economic growth and recovery.

"This inaugural engagement, is an important step towards our sector being able to constructively work alongside the DMRE to reduce obstacles to the roll-out of renewable energy in our country and help clean, green energy play an essential role in the government's economic stimulus package, designed to accelerate economic recovery," said Ntombifuthi Ntuli, CEO of South African Wind Energy Association (Sawea).

Mantashe stressed that the energy sector needs to act as a unit that incorporates the various renewable energy technologies, instead of technology competition. He also outlined the importance of the renewable energy sector's role in economic growth and job creation in the long term and the need for the industry to define its role in the just and systematic energy transition.

The next steps will be to finalise the Ministerial Engagement Forum that should include key stakeholders in the renewable energy sector, including industry bodies, government (led by the DMRE) and organised labour.

Resolving issues

"An initial key focus is to resolve matters around the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Programme, such as new generation capacity procurement; sector contribution to resolving the energy crisis; job creation and the just energy transition; and industrialisation, amongst other pressing issues that will unlock growth. The forum should resolve obstacles to the implementation of the IRP 2019, as well as to engage on tariff issues," said Ntuli.

The inaugural event wrapped up with the minister remarking that his expectations had been exceeded and that he hoped that it would set the tone for ongoing and regular engagements on addressing the country's energy challenge.

In addition to renewable energy associations, participants included professional bodies, Eskom, Cosatu, Business Unity South Africa, the Black Business Council, the Association of Municipal Electricity Distributors of South Africa (AMEU) and the Energy Intensive Users Group (EIUG).

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