

Power2the People: workshop to focus on socio-economic development alongside wind conference

A one-day workshop running alongside wind energy conference Windaba will provide a forum for idea sharing and best practice development to ensure the ZAR5 Billion to be generated for communities from wind farms is invested collaboratively and effectively.

The title of the event, which will be held on November 4 in Cape Town is 'Power2the People': also the theme of this year's conference. It is being co-ordinated by the South African Wind Energy Association's (SAWEAs) 'Wind for Communities' working group. Leading the proceedings will be Peter Willis, regular facilitator of the Eskom NGO forum and the South African Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change. One highlight of the programme is a presentation from Kugan Thaver, Head of Strategic High Impact Projects, SIP Project office at Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) who will share the government agency view on how the wind industry is doing so far.

"The workshop is a continuation of an event we held in Johannesburg in May where we began to look at ways we could share knowledge and plans around the socio-economic and economic development initiatives (SED/ED) being implemented using funds generated from wind farms," explains working group chair and Chairperson of SAWEA, Dipolelo Elford, who will also presenting at the workshop. "Ultimately our goal is to ensure such funds are used efficiently and effectively enabling communities to get the best possible benefit from these opportunities."

Aimed at all those involved in the wind industry and/or SED and ED initiatives, subjects for discussion at the workshop will include: updates on what is happening at government, industry and community level; improving

understanding around the principles and practices of effective and sustainable community development and forming a clearer vision for community initiatives generated by funds from wind farms in the REIPPPP programme.

The full theme for this year's conference, which is run by SAWEA and will be held at the Cape Town International Conference Centre from 3-5 November, is 'Power2thePeople: Changing lives through wind energy' and other conference sessions will also highlight the significant benefits that developments will bring to neighbouring communities. A community trust ownership scheme is also part of the programme and local communities own up to five per cent of their local development in shares. How these financial benefits can be most effectively spent and distributed will form a major part of the debate at both Windaba and the workshop.

SAWEA has an impressive list of prestigious speakers confirmed and expects the number of delegates to again exceed 500. Windaba is the biggest wind conference held on the African continent. Tina Joemat-Pettersson, Energy Minister and Windaba patron and Karen Breytenbach, leader of the government's Public Private Partnership (PPP) Unit and figurehead of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) have both confirmed their attendance as speakers.

Energy thought leader Mike Roussow from Eskom and his colleague Keith Bowen, the utility's modeller of the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) will join Cas Coovadia, acting CEO of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) to debate in the plenary session on 'aligning the South African wind agenda with the broader policy objectives from Government'. A number of influential international speakers will also contribute, including the Danish Minister for Trade and Development, the Secretary General of the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) and the Executive Secretary of REN 21.

There will be an opportunity for direct engagement on the subject of local content between original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry. The team of consultants leading the study into localisation of the wind energy sector in South Africa will also be in attendance.

Conference delegates will also contribute to a high level strategic planning session for South Africa's International Renewable Energy Conference (SAIREC) which will be held for the first time in 2015, incorporating Windaba and that is expected to attract more than five thousand delegates from all over the globe.

For further information on Windaba and the conference programme, please visit the Windaba website at www.windaba.co.za.