

Leading power firms showcase new technologies to Africa

75 international exhibitors and over 2,800 delegates converged at the Sandton Convention Centre for the fifth annual POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa in July, to explore power solutions and discuss strategies and technologies for power sector growth on the continent.

With the urgent need for stable and affordable power across Africa a top of mind issue, local power companies exhibited alongside their international counterparts at POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa 2017 in Sandton, to showcase solutions to meet the continent's power needs more effectively.

Host utility Eskom's new Interim Chairman, Zethembe Khoza, said Eskom was proud of its association with POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa. "Today, Eskom has 29 power stations with a total nominal capacity of 44GW. Yet across Africa, energy growth remains low, with approximately 60% of Africans living without electricity. Advancements in generation and distribution technologies such as energy storage, distribution data storage, off-grid solutions, smart grid technologies, electric vehicles and new renewable and clean energies all impact on how the energy industry can substantiate value to our customers. Africa has a momentous task ahead, but the spirit of progress, innovation, partnership and integrated advancement of our industry will help us unite as a single super grid in future. Eskom is open to continue doing business with the rest of Africa," he said.

George Njenga, Regional Executive, GE Steam Power Systems, Sub-Sahara Africa at event gold sponsor GE Power South Africa, said power sector progress and innovative business models across Africa were cause for optimism. "We have seen remarkable uptake of new technology and digital solutions in the pan-African power sector," he said, noting that Internet of Things technologies and data analytics were among the next big disruptors in the sector.

Collaboration and advanced technologies were a theme running throughout POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa 2017, with exhibitors keen to network and share knowledge with pan-African stakeholders.

Siyabonga Mbanjwa, Regional Managing Director at Sener Southern Africa, said global engineering and technology Sener, a world leader in CSP, parabolic trough and central tower technologies and molten salt storage systems, was effectively launching its local presence to Africa by participating in POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa 2017.

He said a key theme running through POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa 2017 had been the optimal energy mix. "We have to look at reliability and affordability, but it's also important to have a low carbon emissions technology in place and to look at the benefits when it comes to industrialisation, localisation and job creation. We therefore need to look at a mix that can balance these factors. A country like South Africa, with one of the highest radiation levels in the world, we need to take advantage of solar. Of course we also have coal for baseload power, but it's important that when we use our coal resources, we use clean technology. Emerging technologies such as gas can also support baseload power."

Collaboration is important in meeting Africa's future needs, he said. "We are all connected and interdependent, so it's important that we all talk at forums such as POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa. South Africa is a consumer of power in Africa, but it's important that we have sessions such as these so we can share ideas and knowledge, and move towards interconnectivity," Mbanjwa said.

Rod Tyack, Marketing and Sales Manager Southern Africa at Bureau Veritas, with a presence in 140 countries including 30 African countries, said the company had enjoyed good response and traffic during POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa. As a certification, inspection and testing specialist, the company operates across multiple sectors and participates in international POWER-GEN conferences and exhibitions too. Aiming to expand its presence in Africa, Bureau Veritas participated in POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa to network with the quality delegates at the event. "Renewables are an area we'd like to grow in, but renewables IPP growth has been held back in the region, with a lot of IPP projects on hold at the moment," said Tyack.

Zeng Junde, Vice President of the Beijing Power Equipment Group Co., Ltd., part of the China Energy Engineering Corporation Limited (CEEC Ltd), said the company, already fielding an office in South

Africa, was seeking to expand its presence across Africa. POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa 2017 was an excellent networking and lead-generation platform, he said, with added credibility due to attendance by the South African Minister of Public Enterprises, Lynne Brown, Eskom's new Interim Chairman, Zethembe Khoza, and a VIP delegation of sub-Saharan African power sector stakeholders. Jan Antonczyk, Director Middle East, Africa & Asia at Energoprojekt-Katowice SA, noted that his company was participating in POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa for the third consecutive year this year, with a view to capitalising on the networking opportunities and staying abreast with power sector trends on the continent. "As an engineering company supporting independent power producers, we see the market has slowed somewhat, with investors cautious about what the future holds. However, markets change and it is important to stay on top of developments in the sector. POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa are an excellent platform for doing so," he said. POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa 2018 will take place from 17 – 19 July at the Sandton Convention Centre. For more information visit www.powergenafrika.com or #PGAFRICA.

Ends

Issued by ITP Communication on behalf of POWER-GEN & DistribuTECH Africa. For further information or images, please contact Leigh Angelo at leigh@tradeprojects.co.za or Tel: (011) 869 9153