

eSwatini works on energy independence

By  Nicci Botha

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The tiny Kingdom of eSwatini has developed a comprehensive long-term energy master plan based on renewable energy to reduce its dependency on its neighbours for its electricity supply.



Source: Mercom India

The country has relied on imported power from South Africa's Eskom and Mozambique's Electricidade de Mocambique in the past, but by adopting a consultative approach with all stakeholders, the eSwatini government has developed an independent power producer policy that was conducive for doing business and attractive to investors.

"10MW of solar photovoltaic (PV) capacity will be commissioned by the end of this year, and an additional 40MW has been awarded to potential independent power producers. We are ready to issue requests for proposals, and 40MW of biomass will follow," eSwatini Energy Minister Peter Bhembe said at the Africa Energy Indaba in Cape Town.

Besides providing its citizens with access to affordable, clean energy, the eSwatini government is planning to build a pipeline of investment opportunities because the food-energy-water nexus "could not be left out".

Bhembe is proud that his utility is the most profitable of all the country's parastatals. He attributes this to pre-paid meters "so that nobody can not pay".

"The utility is able to finance some projects internally, as money is available," he said.

“ *Renewable energy is an enabler as Africa's population continued to grow* ”

The renewables sector needed to "attract dramatically more capital" to meet the continent's growing energy needs as well as its climate objectives.

"This decision must not remain a political one, but one that is translated into enabling frameworks, project delivery and the productive use of energy, with the support of development agencies and partner countries," Bhembe said.

"Africa must decide how it wants to feed, educate, provide healthcare and improve the welfare of its children by 2030, and beyond. Renewable energy is an enabler for all of this," he said.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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