



MINISTRY
PUBLIC ENTERPRISES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES, MR PRAVIN GORDHAN,
AT THE LAUNCH OF ESKOM'S CONTAINERISED MICROGRID ELECTRIFICATION
PROJECT FOR THE SWARTKOPDAM COMMUNITY IN DAWID KRUIPER
MUNICIPALITY, NORTHERN CAPE**

I grew up in Durban, and at school I was taught Latin which nobody knows these days.

So let me pay my respects to the Premier (Northern Cape Premier, Hon Zamani Saul), who is a friend, leader. And I suppose I can call him a comrade as well. I'm sure he won't mind.

Greetings to the MECs, mayors and councillors. I must admit, I did not know where Swartkopdam was.

Then to the Eskom delegation led by the Chairperson of the Board (Mr Mpho Makwana), Monde Bala (Group Executive: Eskom Distribution), who has worked very hard together with the rest of this Eskom team.

Congratulations on the good work that you've done. And the lights that you have brought to this part of South Africa.

So, as the Chairperson said, two or three days ago, we celebrated Nelson Mandela Day. And this is Nelson Mandela month.

Mr. Mandela spent 27 years, just in case some of the younger people have forgotten, in prison so that we can bring electricity to Swartkopdam, so that the Premier can introduce a better health system and education system for all of us, regardless of our background or language, our religion, and the kind of culture that we might practice.

So all of us today shouldn't just remember Nelson Mandela and his generation and many other freedom fighters for South Africa. But we should also respect the kind of dream that they had for all of us, the dream that they had for a free South Africa, but in particular, the dream that they had for the children of South Africa.

They gave up the freedom as individuals and as families so that all of us in South Africa over time, will have education for our children, electricity in every house, water in every house, a decent dwelling in which our people live, and above all human dignity for all South Africans.

But the second thing we need to talk about is this institution called Eskom. For most of the 100 years of Eskom's life we should not forget that Eskom only supplied electricity to about 20% of South Africans – that is two out of every 10 South Africans.

Today almost nine out of 10 South Africans will have access to electricity except when there's load shedding.

But we must also remember that Eskom is a public institution. It is an institution that belongs to all South Africans. It doesn't belong to somebody called Eskom.

It is a servant of the people of South Africa. And so given Eskom-ites, you are good public servants. And the third thing I want to say is that as good public servants they have done some interesting things (as depicted today by the launch of Eskom's) Containerised Microgrid.

So that is a creation of people from Eskom. It's a creation which says even if the long wires can't come to Swartkopdam electricity will still come to Swartkopdam.

With electricity these young children that are at school today, I believe there's only 36 of them at the moment, they are going to become the innovators of the future. They are going to become the generation that uses electricity to imagine things that we never imagined as adults in South Africa.

So all of this is happening in a world that is changing very fast. And South Africa must not be left behind in this world, and even Swartkopdam must not be left behind.

It's a world where climate change is impacting many, many communities and countries throughout the world today. So in the lives of most of the young people here today, they're going to see a very different energy future, 20-30 years from today.

They are going to see very different schooling system, and computer systems in 20 or 30 years, not even 20 or 30 years, in five years from today.

And that is why the government of Northern Cape must be complimented for having young people on the Cabinet of the government of the Northern Cape.

So over the next 10-15-20 years, computers as we know them are going to change, the climate is going to change, the way we live our lives and the way we communicate is going to change, and the way we get energy and electricity is going to change as well, and that is why government, and the President has asked that Eskom must also change.

It must also get used to the idea that there will be coal, there will be gas, there will be diesel, but there will also be renewables like the solar panels that you have around you that will give us the mixture of energy that we require.

The Northern Cape is going to be the home of most of the renewable energy investments that take place in South Africa and have also already taken place in South Africa.

But we are going to require 1000s of kilometres of these wires called transmission wires to connect the renewables that are built in the Northern Cape with the rest of the country.

And similarly, with Mr. Bala as the head of distribution, his job is to make sure that all the Swartkopdams in the Northern Cape and elsewhere in the country receive the electricity through these wires and through the Containerised Microgrids.

So thank you for the welcome to Swartkopdam.

And today is the beginning of a fascinating future for our younger people and for the community here, and there'll be many more communities that will benefit from the good work that has been done by our Eskom colleagues.

Thank you.

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