

Energy Imbizo

A series of Imbizos, gatherings where government meets the people, took place during 7 - 14 April 2008 in the Western Cape.

This is part of the National Imbizo Focus Week. Imbizo Focus Weeks are held in each province every year. Government officials (including the Provincial Premier, Ministers of Provincial Departments and other senior government officials) visit different communities and interact with citizens on the ground. They discuss service delivery matters on local level with communities and listen to their unique problems and constraints.

The theme of the Focus Week in 2008 was "Building Communities, Changing Lives".

The Western Cape hosted 15 Imbizos, 12 of which are community imbizos and 3 sectoral imbizos. The sectoral imbizos focus on safety (creating safer schools), energy and health (TB action plan).

A Provincial Energy Imbizo was held at the Muizenberg Civic Centre on 9 April 2008. The main aim of the imbizo was for stakeholders in the province to discuss the 'Action Plan to save 500MW electricity, which requires a commitment from all sectors – government, business and the public. Approximately 500 people attended this Energy imbizo

Western Cape Premier Ebrahim Rasool was accompanied at the energy imbizo by Tasneem Essop, the provincial Minister for Environment, Planning and Economic Development, and Cameron Dugmore, the provincial Minister for Education, as well as Richard Dyantyi, the provincial Minister for Local Government and Housing. The provincial manager for Eskom, Peter Sebola and his colleague from Eskom, Alvie Sylvester was also present.

The provincial government, Local government and Eskom presented their strategies and programmes at the Imbizo. Presentations were followed by the questions and discussions from the participants.

Current challenges

The following challenges were highlighted at the Imbizo:

Load Shedding

The province made a deal with Eskom to voluntarily save 500MW and be exempted from load shedding. The two months progress report from Eskom indicated that the province only managed to save 4% of electricity. The 4% saving was mainly from big industrial companies with a very limited reduction response from commercial customers and residential sector. Minister Essop emphasized that in 2006 when the Koeberg nuclear power station was

temporarily closed down for repairs, the province managed to save 400MW of electricity. She said that if it was done in 2006 it can be done in 2008.

Since the 4% of electricity reduction was mainly from large industrial companies, the Western Cape Premier, Mr. Ebrahim Rasool, argued that intensive voluntary saving at the household level is essential. He further stated that there needs to be a drastic mental and lifestyle change in the Western Cape as high electricity usage was "not a lifestyle right". People still believe that in South Africa we have cheap abundant electricity; people just have to be aware that this is no longer the case.

With regards to load shedding, Alvie Sylvester from Eskom stated that load schedules are not consistent, they need to be redesigned.

Solutions with regards to current energy challenges

- Education to get people committed and motivated
- A focus on energy efficiency when building low cost houses
- Decentralized powers and functions in energy
- Set targets for municipalities to achieve the 10% saving plan. Monitor energy use and consumption of different sectors.
- Eskom needs to collaborate with the built environment
- Greening programme

Renewable Energy

In the Western Cape, the renewable energy sector presents a high value investment and development potential.

The provincial government of the Western Cape concluded an agreement with the British High Commission (BHC) for a Clean Energy Governance Programme for the Western Cape.

The principal development benefit from the Clean Energy Governance Programme is an enhanced Energy governance and policy environment which supports, fast-tracks and sustains renewable energy and energy efficiency interventions in the province of the Western Cape through the development of a proposed Sustained Energy Facilitation Act and supporting regulations, the establishment of a Sustainable Energy Task Team, and the active promotion of a conducive investment and finance framework for sustainable energy. Integrated in this will be the promotion of carbon reduction activities and fast tracking of CDM projects

The Western Cape Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (CCSAP)

The key issue arising from CCSAP is that poor communities are the most vulnerable to climate change. Climate change is poverty issue.

The Provincial Government of the Western Cape has undertaken a comprehensive audit of all the projects and programmes in the province which are making contribution to climate change response.

The key of government is to rapidly introduce enabling legislative and incentives based economic frameworks that together encourage, rather than

restrict, independent renewable energy production. This is being undertaken through the British High commission programme and a German government funded programme.

Public Buildings

The province is currently exploring the mainstreaming of renewable energy technologies within all public buildings, business and households through measures such as Solar water heating, retrofitting and more energy efficient building designs.

Demand Side Management (DSM)

Eskom and the province have a number of initiatives with regards to DSM. The following initiatives were highlighted at the Energy Imbizo:

DSM opportunities

Residential

- Efficient lighting initiatives
- Residential hot water load control
- Solar
- Insulation of houses
- Aerated shower heads and geysers blankets

Commercial

- Energy efficiency and load management
- Efficient lighting, air conditioning and water heating

Mining/Industrial

- Process Improvements
- Compressed Air Systems
- Efficient equipment
- Heating and cooling
- Load Control systems in conjunction with dynamic pricing signals

DSM focus for 2008/9

- Energy services company (ESCO) Projects
- CFL's (Residential Efficient Lighting)
- Electronic Control Gear
- Solar Water Heating
- Power Alert
- Self Generation
- Ripple Control