

**Proposed - Welcome Address and Introducing the Deputy  
Minister**

**Mr Thava Govender, Group Executive: Generation / Acting  
Group Executive: Risk and Sustainability,  
Eskom Expo for Young Scientists**

**03 October 2018**

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Good afternoon

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 38<sup>th</sup> Eskom Expo for Young Scientists International Science Fair (ISF), which coincides with Eskom's 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

We remain privileged and proud to have spent 38 years investing in our youth and in particular in maths and science education.

Over the years, the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists has grown in quantity and value, with 47% more schools participating at the nationwide Eskom Expo regional finals this year. We attracted a total of 1 969 participants – 60% of whom were female – an overall increase of 20% from last year. 615 learners made it through to this year's Eskom Expo International Science Fair (ISF), showcasing a total of 517

projects. The keen interest shown by schools in the rural areas of the country is also very encouraging.

The ISF remains a catalyst for unearthing the country's brightest young minds, opening their eyes to various opportunities and many exciting career options available in the extensive scientific world. I have no doubt that you will be intrigued, as participants present their projects before a panel of judges and industry experts. They do so not only to receive a share of the R14 million in prize money, including bursaries to study in the country and abroad, and learning equipment, but also to get a rare opportunity to compete with the world's best on both continental and global stages.

The best projects will be entered for the world's largest international pre-college science competition: the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in the United States. We are privileged to have had eight representatives in this competition in May this year. I am also optimistic that some of the great minds in our midst will have a similar opportunity to fly the South African flag even higher at this and other prestigious international science fairs.

Ladies and gentlemen, for a project such as this to be a success, support and involvement from various stakeholders is a prerequisite. As the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists we are grateful for the relentless support of parents, guardians, teachers and mentors who continue to play a key role in nurturing our rising stars.

Our sincere appreciation also goes to the Department of Public Enterprises for endorsing this initiative, as well as to the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Science and Technology and all the sponsors for their incomparable support.

Young budding scientists, I wish you well in the competition and other future projects that you will embark on as you continue to develop new ideas and projects that will contribute to the advancement and sustainability of our country.

Having been a student myself at some point, I learnt that constant research and practice as well as employing an interrogative approach to your studies not only tests your thought process but also enables you to move closer to realising your full potential. As Scottish businessman, Thomas Dewar, puts it: "Minds are like parachutes – they only function when open."

My job at Eskom is centred on ensuring that Eskom supplies enough electricity to enable you to study, cook, and conduct business and enjoy a lifestyle you have become accustomed to.

I can honestly say that experiencing the energy from the amazing brain power in this room leaves me feeling inspired and motivated not only about my job but about the future of our country as well. You are what makes South Africa great.

What you have displayed today goes beyond what you have learnt in the classroom and this bodes well with the noble statement a globally celebrated scientist, Albert Einstein, who once said: “Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think.”

On that note, I am pleased to introduce the Honourable Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Mr Enver Surty, who will deliver the keynote address.

Mr Surty is an avid scholar himself. He holds a number of educational qualifications from various universities across the country.

Please join me in welcoming the Honourable Deputy Minister.

I thank you.