

For Immediate Release

Press Release: Monday, 17 January 2022.

Lusaka - The International Labour Organization (ILO), Country Office Lusaka, has signed two separate Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Smart Energy Limited of Zambia (Smartnet) and Renewables Management Services of South Africa (RMS). The MoUs are aimed at supporting skills development through curriculum development, training delivery and work-based learning in the energy sector.

This collaboration comes at a time when the traditional way of delivering skills has been challenged not only by the COVID-19 pandemic but also by the urgency of transitioning to a greener society and the need to tackle the skills challenge beyond the national level.

The MoUs are signed under the ILO's three and a half year Skills for Energy in Southern Africa (SESA) Project – a Public Private Development Partnership (PPDP) regional project implemented with funding from the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by the Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre (KGRTC).

The MoUs establish a framework for governing the cooperation of the ILO through the SESA Project and the two parties (Smart and RMS) to support private sector participation in training delivery which will lead to an **“increased uptake of Renewable Energy (RE), Energy Efficiency (EE) and Regional Energy Integration (REI) interventions in Southern Africa, leading to a more sustainable and low-carbon energy mix”**. It is expected that at the end of the project this cooperation will contribute to training more than 1,600 men and women in renewable energy, energy efficiency, regional energy integration thus enhancing their capacities to apply, manage and promote the latest RE, EE and REI technologies.

The proposed areas of collaboration include:

1. **Curriculum development** in the renewable energy sector with specific focus on solar mini grids. This includes associated services for renewable energy projects such as management services, health and safety, environmental and community engagement that will compliment technical courses under SESA project which will be delivered in the context of a just transition to a low carbon energy mix;
2. **Training Delivery** with private sector providing access to training materials/facilities and/or equipment for trainees in the courses developed in partnership with Private Sector and Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre;
3. **Work based learning**: through site visits, internships, attachments among others as applicable

Hosted by ILO Director Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, Mr George Okutho, the two ceremonies were witnessed by Engineer Kaela Siame, Director of KGRTC and respective parties from RMS, Smartnet, the ILO and KGRTC. “The signing of the MOU signifies the importance of both the Public and Private Sectors’ concerted efforts aimed at contributing to the sub-region having the necessary skilled people to be able to tap into the

rapid development of technology in renewable energy, energy efficiency and regional power pooling” said Mr. Okutho.

He added that the ILO was delighted that the two partnerships with Smartnet and RMS would contribute to improving the quality of jobs for employees through human capital development, skills development, and enhancement.

Speaking on behalf of Smartnet, Director Godfrey Chikumbi said that: “We are delighted to be part of the partnership to build critical skills in renewable energy. Smartnet works in rural areas where energy is supplied to critical institutions such as clinics and has identified skills gaps. SESA comes at the right time to fill this gap by leveraging on partnerships for sustainability and access to investment leading to economic development. Smartnet will provide technical expertise as well as provide equipment for laboratory and demonstration during training. In addition, access to various sites for study tours will also be provided”.

And speaking on behalf of RMS, Director for Finance and Strategy, Ms Cecilia Mulenga noted that: “RMS comes with experience which is aimed at supporting the sector to avoid re-inventing the wheel. RMS is involved in the full scope of renewable energy project development, technical and operations management services as well as financial consulting and management. RMS pledges to share its unique experiences in South Africa and the Region”.

About Smartnet Energy Limited

Smartnet Energy Limited is an **indigenous Zambian owned Solar Energy Solution provider**. It started as a function of Smartnet Networks Limited. Smartnet Energy provides innovative solutions for all power and photovoltaic applications with unmatched customer service everywhere in Zambia. Smartnet Energy is a subsidiary of Smart Networks Limited.

<https://smartnet.co.zm> / <https://smartenergy.co.zm>

About Renewables Management Services (RMS)

RMS is a company that specialises in technical, business management services and project development, in the renewable industry in Africa. Its key personnel has been in the industry since inception amassing a wealth of knowledge around its challenges. Its mission is to become a key market participant in South Africa with an intention to grow into a regional player as many of the surrounding countries adopt renewable energy solutions.

<http://rmsholdings.co.za/>

About the ILO

The only tripartite U.N. agency, since 1919 the ILO brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.

<https://www.ilo.org/africa/about-us/offices/lusaka/lang--en/index.htm>