

The Solar Future South Africa Conference to Return in February 2013

Written by SPVI NR Service
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Cape Town - Rotterdam; 7 January 2012, After a successful inaugural event which took place in Johannesburg eleven months ago, The Solar Future South Africa will be heading back to the Rainbow Nation on 12 February 2013.

“The conference in January was the first one we organised in South Africa and it was a tremendous success. As a result, we decided to come back next year,” says Edwin Koot, CEO of Solarplaza – the driving force behind the event.

Being an international platform for solar energy stakeholders, Solarplaza is renowned for its solar energy conferences of which it has organised over 40-odd around the world so far.

Koot notes that Solarplaza is determined to make the second edition of the Solar Future South Africa, which will take place in Cape Town this time, bigger and better. Last year's event drew over a hundred high profile business leaders, energy experts from around the world, and representatives from government.

They included energy expert Andrew McKenna from US-based Bella Energy, who said he was “very impressed with the quality of the speakers who were generally prime players in the emerging South African market.”

Stephanie Hardy from South Africa-based Power Solutions called the 2012 conference “excellent in terms of the quality of the speakers and the content, superbly well-organised, most informative.”

“We received a collective 8 on the scale of 10 from the participants. It was one of our most successful solar conferences so far,” Koot notes.

Some of the parties that have confirmed their attendance for next year's event include

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representatives from the Department of Energy and Eskom as well as various leading energy contractors and developers from South Africa and abroad, international solar PV guru and entrepreneur Jigar Shah, and Dick Berlijn.

Berlijn, managing director of Pretoria-based solar electricity development firm Subsolar Energy and a returning speaker, says he is looking forward to the event: "The January conference was a balance event, both South African and non-South African visitors. It provided a platform for constructive discussions on solar lessons learned in other countries and the opportunities to lie in South Africa."

Berlijn is most looking forward to particularly the sessions that deal with solar beyond the subsidized programs. "As an industry we have to prove our sustainability and we have to make sure that we create new business cases, and reach new off-takers so we are no longer dependent on government programs," he says, noting that conferences like The Solar Future are necessary in South Africa where plans for large-scale solar projects yet have to be put into practice.

Koot adds that the focus next year will be the potential of solar and its competition position as an alternative energy source as well as how companies can tap into solar without depending on government tenders and subsidies: "We will also pay attention to how solar, as an alternative energy source, can be best marketed."

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