

## *Energy for Africa*

Africa's rising demand for energy and how to meet it will be the focus of discussions at a regional conference in Johannesburg next month, the organisers said yesterday.

Projections published by the United Nations Population Division show that Africa's population has grown by 30 million people in the past year and annual increases are expected to exceed 42 million by 2050.

This means the total population will have doubled to 2.4 billion, translating to some 3.5 million additional people per month or 80 more people per minute.

"The vast increase in the number of people in Africa along with increased standards of living puts significant pressure on the demand for affordable energy," organisers of the Africa Energy Indaba said.

Its next event will take place on February 19 to 20 in South Africa's economic capital.

The Indaba organisers said the past few decades had seen significant improvements and growth in the African economy, with per capita energy consumption growing faster than that of any other continent, largely to increased infrastructure, investment and political stability.

The continent's population was characterised by young people and a growing labour force and was expected to boast the world's largest working-age population by 2034.

"A progressive economy requires substantial energy for increased scale of manufacturing, provision of services and transport," they said.

"Energy remains an essential input to stimulate and ensure uninhibited economic development, driving economic productivity and industrial growth.

"In fact, energy remains fundamental to the functioning of any modern-day economy."

The organisers said African economies were set to profit from rapidly advancing technological devices and the use of these electronic gadgets placed further demand on the energy equation.

"African energy ministers and large energy company CEOs will be discussing and unpacking what the future game-changers for the Africa energy sector will be and how to meet the escalating demand for energy," they said, referring to next month's meeting. – ANA