



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ADDRESS BY Ms. NOMVULA MOKONYANE, MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION, DURING LIMPOPO WATER AND SANITATION SUMMIT AT KARIBU LEISURE RESORT, MOPANI DISTRICT.

9th July, 2015

SPEAKER'S NOTES

“Water is life, Sanitation is dignity”

INTRODUCTION

We are all, in the various spheres of governments, wielding power at the behest of our people. And therefore, when it comes to issues of water and sanitation we cannot afford to be territorial to the extent of not realizing the bigger picture.

I'm here today to make an appeal to all of us to enter into a phase of Renewal in dealing with issues of water and sanitation. Thus we all have to accept that it cannot be 'business as usual' in the manner in which we address the challenges at hand.

I have come here to earnestly request for your co-operation and a meeting of the minds towards the ideal of this government of the people to really

and truly better the lives of South Africans through the delivery of these very essential services we have been mandated to deliver.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is always important to remember where we come from in order for us to have a clear view of where we are going. This we do not do in order to feel sorry for ourselves but rather to appreciate the road we have travelled and also put into perspective the reality of where we need to be going to.

As a Department we are guided by the National Development Plan, ANC manifesto and the second National Water Resource Strategy in our work. Indeed we have resolved that we will apply a seamless integrated water approach, something that has to become the norm in the water sector.

Essentially, this is a co-ordinated approach that is inter-dependent and inter-related to other Departments at National level, provincial and local government as well as the private sector, civil society, and to the people.

In addition, this approach will ensure that we provide a sustainable and holistic approach across the value chain of water supply, from source to tap and from tap back to source.

Our engagement with local government has identified a number of challenges; prominent of which were the issues of ageing infrastructure, lack of budgets for operations and maintenance, poor technical capacity as well as lack of proper water and sanitation plans. And Limpopo, is not an exception.

In pursuit of solutions aimed at addressing these challenges, the Department continues to work in close concert with the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) and National Treasury to enhance and strengthen the Back to Basics Programme. To this end, clear benchmarks of acceptable performance have been set in an effort to ensure that all municipalities perform their basic responsibilities consistently and without fail.

The challenges that we need to address as a collective speak to what is aptly called the “bread and butter issues” that confront our people. It cannot be right for a Ma-Dlamini or Kokwana Ndou to continue to battle the elements in order to satisfy the basic needs of any human being, these being access to a safe and sustainable water supply as well as a dignified means of sanitation.

It cannot be correct that instead of returning home to study and prepare for the next day’s lessons our learners must take precious time out of their days to draw water from unreliable water sources or to ensure better ablution facilities for themselves and their families, some of whom are child-headed

We need active participation of our people in the water sector to ensure that water-issues such as water conservation and water demand management programmes, water awareness education and vandalism of infrastructure get taken up as societal issues.

Limpopo is home to more than 5 Million people and as the custodian of water resources in the Country, we are mandated by the constitution and the National Water Act to ensure that the Citizens of South Africa, including Limpopo, have access to water and descent sanitation.

The right to water as a basic service is a constitutional right. Yet, ownership of access to water continues to perpetuate inequality and poverty in our country, including here in Limpopo.

However, we need to ensure that through summits such as the one today we should be able to open up this protected space so as to ensure that water as a natural resource is available and shared by all.

As we celebrate sixty years of the Freedom Charter, which states that the People Shall Govern, I wish to reassure the people of Limpopo that the Department will continue to employ coordinated and interrelated approaches at all times to ensure that all the people, rich and poor, black and white, as well as urban and rural are provided with water and sanitation services they deserve.

CURRENT WATER SITUATION IN LIMPOPO

We are water scares country with 40% less than the annual world average rainfall, our country is the 30th driest country internationally. Our average annual rainfall is less, compared to the world's average. Surface water

resources are stressed due to current developments taking place in the province, available water is less than water required and that mean we have water deficit.

Taking the above situation into consideration, we cannot sit back and lament, but have to think hard as to how we can use innovative ways to mitigate the challenges at hand.

We call upon the community to adhere to their respective Water Service Authorities (WSA) water restrictions as they are meant to save and conserve water for future generation.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS

All the projects that the Department will be supporting will have to be assessed for their readiness for implementation, expected output and effectiveness. Project monitoring and evaluation systems will have to be put in place to ensure that there is value in every Rand spent.

The success of this approach will be based on the development of Water and Sanitation Plan for the whole Province based on what each District Municipality shall have developed. These Plans must be accounted for, bankable as well as indicate the capacity for implementation.

In this Summit, we need to begin asking the hard questions; for an example, how does infrastructure pay for itself. Why, is it that the

Municipalities seem not to be able to deal with the Operations and Management related matters of infrastructure; and lastly, why are we always stuck in the mindset of planning for new infrastructure, rather than finding ways of improving what we already have.

LIMPOPO NORTH DEVELOPMENTS

The Department is also aware of growing developments in the northern parts of Limpopo Province, in particular the area known as the "Limpopo Valley". These developments will increase trade, increase investments, create jobs, improve the social structures and effect administration.

In our continuous effort to ensure that water resources are made available to meet the needs for this area, the Department has embarked on developing plans and strategies to ensure that the necessary water is available when it is required.

Due to limited water resources these has pushed us to start negotiations for water with our Northern Neighbour Zimbabwe. Under the Joint Water Commission (JWC) that The Government of South Africa and the Government of Zimbabwe have signed and entered into recently, both countries agreed to undertake joint technical studies to evaluate the possibilities of South Africa being able to access water from the water resources like dams and catchments in Zimbabwe.

These studies will be initiated jointly between water Departments in both countries.

CONCLUSION

We are well aware that water is a critical part of social and economic development to alleviate poverty, which is why the Department is working together with the Provincial and local Government to establish water and sanitation forums.

I am informed about the district engagements meeting already held in preparations for this summit were even structures representing community members like Community Development Organisations and Traditional councils were invited to give input.

Through my Department we are going to keep such platforms open to allow representatives of community structures and the Traditional Councils to give us feedback on water and sanitation services rendered to them.

Dankie

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