



INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS engaged in USAID Resilient Waters' final event.

16 May 2023

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) was part of the final event of the USAID Resilient Waters which took place on 11 May 2023, at the Pretoria National Botanical Gardens.

Resilient Waters is a five-year programme funded by USAID/Southern Africa that aims to build more resilient and water-secure Southern African communities and ecosystems. It does this by improving management of transboundary natural resources and increasing access to safe drinking water and sanitation services, with a specific focus at three levels: local; national; and transboundary.

Resilient Waters built strong relationships with national government ministries and departments across its footprint in Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The programme also supported the work of local communities through community representatives and leaders, and furthermore developed partnerships with other regional organisations and programmes.

DWS Chief Director: International Relations, Ms Duduzile Mthembu, gave the opening remarks at the event. She indicated that there are approximately 78 million people who live in Southern Africa Region and the number is expected to rise to 86 million over the course of the next ten years.

She further elaborated that two of the five countries within the region are considered to have high water stress impacts. This means that Southern Africa faces a serious socio-economic risk related to water security.

Ms Mthembu spoke with enthusiasm when expressing that the approach taken by Resilient Waters has been very intriguing because it is based on the idea that sustainable resilience with inclusive growth on southern Africa is possible by enhancing cooperation between individuals and institutions at the community, national, and regional levels.

She further affirmed that, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 6, DWS of the Republic of South Africa is dedicated to ensuring that everyone has access to water and sanitation services by the year 2030 and that no one is left behind.

Some of the Department's key efforts that have been undertaken in association with USAID and other organisations to address some of the problems that are essential to water security are:

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- ❖ To increase access to water and sanitation in South Africa. Resilient Waters is working across a range of institutional scales, from municipal to national to regional. This work includes supporting the Polokwane Municipality, DWS, and the Limpopo River Basin Commission (LIMCOM).
- ❖ The Limpopo Integrated Management Information System (LIMIS) was evaluated by LIMCOM with assistance from USAID's Resilient Waters Program in order to strengthen this crucial management tool, encouraging increased data and information sharing, and better collaboration across the Limpopo River Basin.
- ❖ To create the National Faecal Sludge Management Strategy for on-site sanitation systems, DWS and the USAID Resilient Waters Program agreed into a Collaboration Agreement in 2020, to improve the operation and upkeep of on-site sanitation systems, prevent groundwater contamination, protect public health, and protect the environment from pollution throughout the sanitation service chain.

Ms Mthembu concluded by expressing gratitude to the team of USAID professionals who are assigned to support various initiatives across the water sector. She has also appreciated the involvement of institutions that opened up their facilities to enable the execution or implementation of these crucial projects.

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