



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### **Public – Private Partnership for clean, safe and healthy watercourses**

25 March 2024

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Mpumalanga Provincial Operations in partnership with Exxaro Matla Coal celebrated the National Water Week on 20 March 2024 to showcase the power of partnerships in creating the awareness on water conservation and the protection of water resources.

The National Water Week celebration incorporated a public education programme at the Matla Club where participants were engaged on the importance of the National Water Week and World Water Day and reminded of their responsibilities to conserve water and protect water infrastructure and water resources.

The formal educational programme was opened by Ms Simphiwe Mthiyane, the Matla Sustainability Manager who welcomed the participants and pledged the mine's support for the initiative to ensure sustainable water resources.

Ms Elelwani Nethavhani from Exxaro Matla Coal outlined the purpose of the day's activities and the importance of celebrating World Water Day and creating awareness during the National Water Week. She outlined the theme "Water for Peace" and the key messages for this year. "The key messages for this year are water can create peace or spark conflict. When water is scarce or polluted, or when people have unequal, or no access, tensions can rise. By cooperating on protecting water, we can balance everyone's water needs and help stabilize the world. The second message is prosperity and peace rely on water. As nations manage climate change, mass migration and political unrest, they must put water cooperation at the heart of their plans. And the last key message for this year is water can lead us out of crisis. We can foster harmony between communities and countries by uniting around the fair and sustainable use of water – from United Nations conventions at the international level, to actions at the local level", she said.

She further reminded the participants of the importance of wise water use and water conservation, especially as South Africa is a water scarce country. She further encouraged them to prevent the pollution of water resources and promote healthy environments as is the purpose of the cleaning exercise undertaken in Phola.

Mr Themba Khoza from DWS Mpumalanga appreciated the initiative of the mine and called for the strengthening of such partnerships to ensure that water resources are protected to ensure sustainable and reliable water supply as South Africa is a water scarce country. "As

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the Department of Water and Sanitation, we welcome such initiatives and partnerships and we are always available to support. As the theme of this year talks about water for peace, it is important that we play our role in fostering peace and stability in our communities and with our neighbouring countries. As South Africa sharing rivers with other countries, it is important that the neighbouring countries get their equitable share of water and we protect and prevent the pollution of the water resources to allow the flow of quality water to our neighbours”, he said.

He further called on the audience to be ambassadors of water conservation and the protection of water resources because every drop counts in a water scarce country like South Africa as water has no substitute.

The participants then went to clean a wetland and stream which is a tributary of Saalklapspruit in Phola. The surrounding communities were also engaged and awareness was created on the importance of keeping the environment, especially water resources clean and healthy.

**Themba Khoza**

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