

Announcement of the winners of the South African Youth Water Prize
Ms Buyelwa Sonjica, Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry
Kathu High School, Kathu, Northern Cape Province
12 August 2004

Goeie môre, Dumelang, Molweni

It is my honour and privilege to share this important occasion with you. Not too long after celebrating Youth Day on June 16, we are gathered here in Kathu to honour and celebrate the achievements of the youth. This means that the youth celebration is ongoing, it is not a once off celebration.

Remember that in 1976, we gathered to bury the youth, which were victims of apartheid, and their struggle gave us freedom, which we all enjoy today. The struggle of our country forced the young people to abandon schools and engage in the struggle against inferior education, "Bantu Education". This, our democratic our government acknowledge as a huge contribution to the struggles for the liberation of our country. Hence June 16 was set aside as a national youth day to commemorate contribution of the youth. This day is being celebrated also to remind the youth that time to fight is over and that their contribution and participation to the development of our country is equally important. We want to emphasise that now the young people of this country are rewriting our history by their achievements. We are celebrating excellence in education, we are reaping the fruits of our struggles.

We praise the young people whose achievements will place South Africa on record in the history books of the world. We are privileged to witness the rise of a generation that will make South Africa stand toe-to-toe, shoulder-to-shoulder with other great nations of the world. There is a saying I would like you to remember, "The Greatness of any Nation is measured by the way it celebrates its children and their achievements." It is on that basis that I have invited you here today.

In our country we have huge challenges especially in the area of water resource management and policies and strategies have been developed to overcome them. Our Department is also providing opportunities and opening up space for the youth to make their contribution towards such challenges. The implementation of a school based water and sanitation education programme called the "2020 Vision for Water", is but one measure through which the youth contributes to this important process of ensuring a better life for all.

This 2020 Vision for Water programme seeks to empower the youth with knowledge and water management skills, and will in turn enable them to participate to the integrated water resource management and other environmental programmes. It is through this programme that water and sanitation is integrated into the schools curriculum. This also demonstrates our commitment to support the implementation of the Outcomes Based Education (OBE).

Through the 2020 Vision for Water programme our children learn about water & sanitation at early ages on a daily basis. We are therefore instilling the values of water resource management into the future generation, our youth. These young people will in turn transfer this knowledge and skills to their parents and communities at large. Children are better placed to change the mindset and educate the parents that water is not a gift from God, but a scarce resource that should be conserved and protected.

Most importantly, the programme is used to enhance the interest of youth in water resource management careers as well as promoting science, technology and research. I have just launched a book on Careers in Water, which will guide the learners on the selection of careers on water resource management and within the water sector broadly.

"Careers in Water" is one of the scientific, scarce skill which was reserved for the few and the then privileged groups. Recent surveys indicate that the technically trained human resource in the country is predominantly constituted of white males but the most challenge

we face is that it is ageing. As leaders and educators we have a duty to encourage young people to study science and more specifically studies in Water for sustainable development as water is central to economic activity.

Today we are here to congratulate the learners from various provinces, who participated in the South African Youth Water Prize Competition (SAYWP), which is a project of the 2020 Vision for Water & Sanitation Education Programme. The South African Youth Water Prize is usually preceded by the provincial and national competitions and culminates in the International Junior Water Prize held in Stockholm, Sweden annually. In this competition the learners identify water and sanitation related problems in their communities. The challenge for these young people is to come up with solutions and innovations to solve those problems. This is what the South African Youth Water Prize competition is all about.

Learners from approximately 35 countries participate in this competition. In 2003 Claire Reid from St Theresa High School in Gauteng won the Stockholm International Junior Water Prize, she indeed placed us in the books of the world.

Mr Programme Director, as we are all aware, this prestigious event coincides with the Women's Day celebrations - women who always double their efforts by nurturing the youth who we are proud of today and equally playing a pivotal role to our freedom and now to the country's development. Women are at the coalface of a child's upbringing and would be the one to encourage our children to strive for more and more achievements. Women and children play an important role in the management of water resources. It is in this regard that my Department has a programme to honour women annually through Women In Water Awards, and the youth through the Baswa Le Meetse Award.

Before I announce the national winners, I first want to give my personal appreciation and thanks:

- To Ms Naledi Pandor, MP, Minister of Education, and her officials for their support to this Programme, I am honoured by our partnership. My Department is grateful for the positive manner you have upheld our partnership over the years.
- To all our partners for their support, especially to the adjudicating team from various institutions, "Isandla sihlamba esinye, Yenzani njalo ukuxhasa amalinge esizwe sethu"
- To the parents of all the learners, the principals and educators of various schools educators nationally who supported these learners. They moulded us and they are doing the same for our children, I want to say to them "Long Live Educators Long Live",
- To the learners who have entered the competition, and those who have not yet entered the competition I encourage you to continue or to start even if you do not win. It is not all about winning, it is about gaining new experiences through participation and taking on new challenges.
- To the officials of my Department who have tirelessly managed this programme for five years now. You know I value your support and wish you growing strength and I pledge my support to you as well.

May I also use this opportunity to express my gratitude to the following institutions and sponsors of this competition:

- University of Natal sponsored a bursary of R11 000 since the inception of this competition.
- Cape Technikon sponsored a bursary to cover the full tuition fees for the course of study in Water Engineering national Diploma and BTech degree studies in the Department of Civil Engineering at Cape Technikon.

- Water Research Commission sponsored 4 computers with software and a video camera.
- Kumba Resources sponsoring transport for the school children to this event.

The winning student can now decide whether he or she wishes to study at the University of Natal or Cape Technikon.

Thank you once more for lending a hand for the betterment of our country and for investing in the initiatives of a sustainable development.

Mr Programme Director let me congratulate and announce the runners up who, we must not forget, are also eligible to grand prizes.

- 1st runners up are Niveshni Moodley and Kirsty van der Berg from Randpark High, Gauteng
- Amazingly we have a tie on the 2nd runners up Nokuthula Dubazane from Qophindlela Secondary, Ladysmith, KZN and Dean Butler from Hoërskool Oosterland, Mpumalanga

All runners up will receive the new desktop computers with software sponsored by Water Research Commission and also an amount of R2 000 each.

Mr Programme Director, now, let me announce the national winner of the South African Youth Water Prize 2003 - the young ambassador of our country, who will carry our national flag in Stockholm, Sweden next week.

He is Jacques Deacon from Kathu High, Northern Cape. Congratulations Jacques and Kathu High.

He is eligible to the -

- Bursaries either from University of Natal or Cape Technikon
- Return ticket to Sweden and accommodation
- Allowance of R2 000
- Video camera sponsored by Water Research Commission.

On behalf of government and the nation, I pledge our support and we send you off with love, pride and best wishes. We hope that this year you will bring the Stockholm Junior Water Prize to South Africa.

Water is life. Water is our future. The youth is our future

I THANK YOU.