

Water Week Celebrations, Free State
Speech by Ms BP Sonjica, Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry,
Thaba Nchu, Free State
29 March 2006

Master of Ceremonies
Honourable Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to thank the Premier, MECs and Free State Stakeholders for the warm welcome I always receive during my visits to the beautiful Province.

We are here today celebrating National Water Week 2006, which started on the 27 March 2006. Our theme for this year is "Water for Growth and Development". Water Week is our Department's campaign to sensitise the public, communities and all other stakeholders about the importance and value of water. In the World Water Forum IV held recently in Mexico, South Africa shared with the world how it has progressed in embracing the principle of "Water as a human right" as enshrined in our Constitution. The importance of water as a catalyst for promoting economic growth in developing countries was also emphasised in this world forum. For many of us, it is often easy to take this valuable resource for granted, however, I am here today to remind you that water is a scarce resource and if we are to adhere to the above principles, we need to use sparingly to ensure its sustainability

Ladies and gentlemen, focus in our country currently, is on promoting economic growth. Water is an important ingredient and catalyst for that growth as no development can take place without this resource, hence our theme this year. Water therefore is an important component of ASGISA. Conservation and responsible use of water is every citizen's responsibility. It is in this context that our Department seeks localise and democratize the management of water resources. This process requires dedication and training for our communities and our children as stakeholders and our future.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry is honoured to have you at this important event. Today we witness the role water can play in alleviating poverty, in our needy communities, like communities in the Thaba Nchu villages.

The Water Research Commission has been involved in funding various water harvesting projects in the Province. These projects proved to be successful and the Department of Agriculture and the Water Research Council contracted the Institute for Soil, Climate to facilitate a technology exchange and further implementation.

I would like to commend the work that has been done by the Institute for Soil, Climate and Water of the Agricultural Research Council on the promotion of water harvesting project in the Thaba Nchu area. This project which is titled "IMPLEMENTATION OF EXIT STRATEGY: On-farm application of in-field rainwater harvesting techniques in Rural Villages in the Central Free State" is best practice which should be replicated in other parts of the country. This initiative contributes to our country's vision of sustainable agriculture and rural development

The research undertaken by the Research Institute over a period of six years on field rainwater harvesting techniques concentrated on five pillars, i.e. sustainable agronomic productivity, entrenchment of risk, managing of natural resources, social acceptability and economical feasibility. Technology exchange has started and more than a thousand households implemented the in-field rainwater harvesting technique in forty two rural villages around Thaba Nchu.

The reality facing South Africa is that 33% of the total population living in communal rural areas, as well as 40% of the population living in densely populated informal tenancy and missionary settlements, are progressively experiencing food insecurity and natural resources are being exploited at an alarming rate. This reality is the

Formatted: Left: 56.9 pt, Right: 56.9 pt, Top: 72 pt, Bottom: 72 pt, Header distance from edge: 14.4 pt, Footer distance from edge: 14.4 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial, 12 pt, Bold

Formatted ... [1]

Formatted ... [2]

Formatted ... [3]

Formatted ... [4]

Formatted ... [5]

Formatted ... [6]

Formatted ... [7]

Deleted: SPEECH BY ... [8]

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted ... [9]

Deleted: the beautiful

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: celebrate

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: about the

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: and value

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: ,

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: responsibility.It

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: ¶

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: is titled

Deleted: "

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: 2¶

motivating force behind this project as it seeks to tip the balance towards household's food security and natural resources conservation.

The Free State Province has potential agricultural land; however rainfall is limited, and seasonal. Unacceptable high percentage of precious water is lost by run-off and evaporation. Wise water use and nutrients conservation technologies, such as rainwater harvesting, have the potential to a better use of precipitation and to contribute to substantially reducing food insecurity, poverty and unemployment.

Use of appropriate technology like rainwater harvesting techniques is also happening in other parts of the world. I learnt whilst in Mexico that women build storage tanks and harvest ground water. This is another option which we as a country need to exploit in areas that have enough groundwater. Let us use innovation, science and technology to open new horizons for better water use in a water scarce country such as South Africa. I would like to call upon organizations like the Soil and Climate institute and WRC to take up this challenge in the good spirit they have already illustrated in this project and investigate the feasibility of this approach.

There are also basic steps each one of us can take to stretch our available water – fixing leaking taps and pipes, closing a tap properly, using showers more frequently are contributions we can all make to save water. Such measures will therefore ensure that there is enough water for both human consumption, our ecology, reserve and for growth and development.

I hope the number of people benefiting from the rainwater harvesting technique will increase to help us achieve our theme of "Water for Growth and Development".

Deleted: of "

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Programme Director allow me to acknowledge the achievements of youth from this province, our young ambassadors , Motebele Motshidi, Sechaba Ramabenyane and Pontsho Moletsane from Sechaba Semaketse Combined School in absentia. These brilliant young men are the international winners of the Stockholm Junior Water Prize 2005 and they come from this Province!! These learners developed a project called Nocturnal Hydro Minimiser. This project is designed to use water efficiently for irrigation by activating the water tap at night when evaporation levels are very low. It ensures that gardens are only watered when the soil has lost the necessary moisture needed by plants. This feature makes it more effective in saving water compared to some commercial models that provide water regardless of whether plants need it or not.

Deleted: , Kgopjane

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: School won

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

I also want to acknowledge the national champions of the Baswa Le Meetse Award 2006, Kgopjane Primary School won 1st prize in the poster category and they are bringing media classroom, water play pump and a cash prize of R4 000 of which 50% will be shared amongst the learners to spend it on educational items and the balance on school resources. Thutho Ke Tsela won 2nd prize on drama category, they are eligible to the R6 000 and consolation prizes. Baswa Le Meetse is a project of the 2020 Vision Programme which is a school based education programme educating the society through children about water and sanitation related issues. The Baswa Le Meetse Award recognises the role of youth in water and sanitation education and awareness campaigns.

Deleted: Meetse Award

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: children .

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: ..

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Deleted: ¶

¶

¶

¶

¶

¶

¶

Formatted: Line spacing: single

Through these initiatives, government is also stimulating the interest of youth to choose careers in the water sector, in order to address the challenges of scarce skills. This programme is in line with the objectives of ASGISA as it seeks to develop the much needed skills in our country. Economic growth will be achieved only if we have the relevant skills, especially in the science and technical fields. Given the size of our aging population with these skills, we need to adopt a rigorous strategy that will see our children, especially girl children, studying science and mathematics. We have to increase the number of women engineers and scientists in the country. The educators must be empowered and motivated to be able to guide the children. As a nation, we cannot afford to rely on foreign expertise.

In conclusion I would like to encourage the society of Free State to conserve water as it is the essence of life, without water there is no life, there will be no economic growth and development

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

I thank you.

Formatted: Font: 10 pt

Page 1: [1] Formatted	Tilde Eloff	29/03/2006 09:57:00
Font: (Default) Arial, 10 pt		
Page 1: [2] Formatted	Tilde Eloff	29/03/2006 09:57:00
Font: (Default) Arial		
Page 1: [3] Formatted	Tilde Eloff	29/03/2006 09:57:00
Font: (Default) Arial, 10 pt		
Page 1: [4] Formatted	Tilde Eloff	29/03/2006 09:58:00
Font: (Default) Arial, Bold		
Page 1: [5] Formatted	Tilde Eloff	29/03/2006 09:57:00
Font: (Default) Arial		
Page 1: [6] Formatted	Tilde Eloff	29/03/2006 09:57:00
Centered, Line spacing: single		
Page 1: [7] Formatted	Tilde Eloff	29/03/2006 09:55:00
Line spacing: single		
Page 1: [8] Deleted	Tilde Eloff	29/03/2006 09:58:00
SPEECH BY MS B P SONJICA, MP, MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY AT THE NATIONAL Water Week Celebrations ON WEDNESDAY, 29 MARCH 2006 AT Thaba Nchu, Free State		
Page 1: [9] Formatted	Tilde Eloff	29/03/2006 09:59:00
Left, Line spacing: single		