



water affairs

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MME REJOICE MABUDAFHASI, DURING THE MUKULA VILLAGE CENTENARY CELEBRATION AT MUKULA CHIEF'S KRAAL, LIMPOPO**

**09 APRIL 2011**

Programme Director

Premier of Limpopo: Mr Cassel Mathale

Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality: Dr F Mdaka

Mayor of Thulamela Local Municipality: Khosi Vho Makumbane

Vho Thovhele Kennedy Midiavhathu Tshivhase

Vho Thovhele Gole Mphaphuli

Khosi Vho Mphathele Takalani

Mahosi vhane ravha navho fhanu

Councillors

Distinguished guests

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

I am elated by the hospitality afforded to me by the Chief and the community of Mukula. It is humbling to be part of this august event whereby the Mukula community underscores the milestones achieved since the arrival of Chief Joel Takalani Tshivhase in 1911.

The Mukula community has been experiencing water shortage challenges from the time when they were cut off from the Damani Water Supply. Last year, during the National Water Week, we allocated an amount of R2 million to address the water shortage challenges in Mukula, which was later increased to R4.1 million. The Vhembe District Municipality also contributed R4 million. The total amount allocated to Mukula Water project is R8.1 million.

The Project Steering Committee which comprises: Department of Water Affairs National and Regional Office, Vhembe District Municipality and Thulamela Local Municipality, Royal Council and Mukula Community representatives, was established in order to identify a reliable water resource, analyse the resource in terms of water quality and quantity, costing and develop a project plan.

## SHORT TERM PLAN

The short term plan to deliver water in Mukula involves the following water sources:

- The existing infrastructure in a form of boreholes were rehabilitated;
- Two new boreholes with an average of 3.5 litres per second have been drilled and tested at Tshidimbini and Tshivhilwji;
- Rationalization of water from Vondo and Damani, and;
- Tankering services.

The access to drinking water has improved despite the challenges that are still faced by community members in some parts of Mukula, the boreholes have been fixed but some areas do not have adequate underground water because the water table is down.

## LONG TERM PLAN

The R1.8 million Mukula Water Project, which is co-funded by both the Department of Water Affairs and Vhembe District Municipality will be implemented once the tender has been awarded. It is aimed at building a reservoir and bulk pipeline taking water from the

Xikundu water scheme to Mukula village. The tender was advertised on Monday, 14 March 2011. The implementation of the project is expected to start mid – May 2011 and completed in June 2012.

The Adopt a River project (through the River Health Programme of the Department of Water Affairs) has allocated R 1.5 million for the rehabilitation of the wetlands and other streams here in Mukula. This project will create jobs for the locals.

The Working for Water Programme will be clearing the identified Invasive Alien Plants in the village and this will also be done through the employment of the local people. The amount allocated to this project will be announced in due course.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS

Mukula Village is watershed with wetlands on the north and south. Besides being important for surrounding communities for grazing and subsistence agriculture, these wetlands also influence the quality of water flowing into the Ngwedi and Mutshindudi rivers, which feeds into the Luvuvhu, which in turn flows into the Limpopo River.

Wetlands play an important role in ensuring a steady supply of clean water, which is essential for human health. In areas this where people use water directly from natural sources such as springs, wetlands play a strong role in keeping people healthy.

Wetlands also act like sponges, slowing down flood waters, storing water when it rains, and then releasing it slowly during the dry season, helping to ensure steady river flow. Some wetlands also play a role in recharging groundwater and as Mukula community normally depends on Boreholes, wetlands around the village are very vital for ground water recharge.

Wetlands are warehouses of biodiversity. They support plants and animals that are specially adapted to wetlands and can live nowhere else, and also provide feeding, roosting and breeding sites for a range of other species.

The department undertakes to ensure that wetlands in Mukula are utilized to augment other sources of water for the community by doing the following:

- Education and Awareness on the importance of wetlands in supporting livelihoods;
- Fencing of wetlands that are associated with springs;
- Removal of alien invasive species in and around the wetlands;

- Cleaning of solid waste dumping in or around the wetlands;
- Rotational grazing in or around the wetlands;
- Encouraging the use of composting as compared to other forms of fertilizers.

## CONCLUSION

South Africa is a water scarce country, like many other countries in Africa, we are faced with a huge challenge that is likely to become a future threat if our water resources are not well managed, protected, used, conserved and developed in a sustainable manner.

It is of utmost importance that we all become water ambassadors:

- Stop damaging water pipes in your community;
- Report burst or leaking pipes to the municipality;
- Report illegal water connection to the municipality.

As government we will not rest until every citizen has access to safe drinking water.

Thank you