



water affairs

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY HON REJOICE MABUDAFHASI, DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS DURING THE 2011 NATIONAL YOUTH WATER SUMMIT IN BIRCHWOOD CONFERENCE CENTRE, BOKSBURG, GAUTENG PROVINCE**

28 JUNE 2011

Minister of Water Resources from the Republic of Zimbabwe: Hon Samuel Nkomo

Deputy Minister of Basic Education: Hon Enver Surty

Deputy Minister of Police: Hon Makhotso Soty

Deputy Minister of Tourism: Hon Tokozile Xasa

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Councilors

Traditional Leaders

Deputy permanent secretary from Namibia: Ms Anna Shiwenda

Heads of Departments

Chief Executive Officers

Senior Officials from various government departments

Partners from Business Community

Principals, Educators and Learners

Distinguished guests

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

I greet you all

We are deeply saddened by the passing on, of our Liberation Stalwart Professor Kader Asmal who was the First Minister of Water and Forestry of our Democratic Government. Ladies and Gentlemen I would like to remind you that the 2020 Vision Education Programme is the brain-child of this great icon. May I therefore humbly request the house to rise for a minute to observe a moment of silence.

I am therefore dedicating this Youth Summit to him.

Today we gather here being the last day of our exciting Summit. We wrap up this Summit with excitement of acknowledging our young people for committing themselves to be Water and Environment Ambassadors who will educate the African Community and beyond about the conservation of our water resources and environment. I call them Water Ambassadors because they have responded to our call of inviting all community stakeholders to partner with us in conserving our precious and scarce resource to ensure sustainable water resources for intergenerational equity.

We are faced with a challenge of increasing population, increasing water demand for economic growth and development whilst the amount of our water remains the same. Most people are not aware that we have limited water resources as we loose a lot of water due to leaks, inefficient use of water for example watering gardens, washing cars, pollution of water sources that result in poor water quality which is a health hazard and our agricultural methods. If our water resources are not well managed, protected, conserved and developed in a sustainable manner, we will have a water crisis, we will not achieve our Millenium Development Goals.

Water and environment are catalysts for social and economic growth and development. "Without Water there will be no life," there will be no development, there will be manifestation of poverty. We will not be able to address issues of food security, health

and economic growth. Hunger and disease will be the order of the day. It is therefore imperative for all countries in the region and beyond to constantly engage and share ideas to address the challenges in order to achieve sustainable water resource management. African countries must join hands in ensuring the protection of their fauna and flora taking their youth along this interesting journey of life as nature conservation is paramount.

Given the above mentioned challenges, the Department has made a call for partnership with communities to participate actively in water resource management. Thus the implementation of various public education programmes aimed at educating the young people and communities is about integrated water resource management. The knowledge acquired will enable active participation of communities and youth. The department is implementing a school based education programme called 2020 Vision. Through this programme we want to instill values of natural resource management and also to promote careers in the water sector in order to address the scarce skills challenge. Learners are the best educators and they are able to change the mindset of their families and entire community.

This programme exposes grade R to12 learners to be able to identify water problems in their communities, develop inventions to address them. Those inventions are presented during the Youth Water Summit which is held annually during Youth Month.

Successes of the Programme:

- *281 computers sponsored by MTN and Water Research Comission have been provided and installed to schools in Limpopo, North West, Eastern Cape, KZN, Gauteng, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga. These computers are connected to the internet and science programmes are also provided.*
- *86 bursaries have been awarded to learners to study water related careers.*
- *South African learners won the Stockholm Junior Water Prize in 2003 and 2005*

- I am also proud to introduce Mr Motebele Moshodi who was 2005 Stockholm Junior Water Prize winner, he was awarded a bursary by the department to study Civil Engineering. He graduated in 2011 and was absorbed by the Department. Ladies and gentlemen please welcome Claire Reid who was the first South African student to win the Stockholm Junior Water Prize in 2003, she was awarded a bursary by the department to study architecture, she has graduated and she is currently running her own business where she is implementing the Reel Gardening Project and she has employed 5 people.
- Nompilo Mahlobo is finishing her Hydrology studies she was the national winner of South African Youth Water prize and represented South Africa in Stockholm in 2006.
- The Department is in the process of printing 350 Learner Support Materials through the Curriculum Support Programme which will be distributed to 350 schools before the end of 2012 in order to promote efficient use of water.
- Today the Department will be awarding 18 bursaries to the learners who emerged out of the public speaking competition with the best speech in creativity, relevance and content.

This clearly demonstrates that the Department contributes towards the Skills development as well as to the critical scarce skills.

#### Anticipated Outcomes

Through Baswa Le Meetse the learners and the communities are empowered with knowledge and water management skills that enable them to:

- Understand that water is a limited resource which must be used efficiently, protected and conserved
- Participate in the management of water resources, promoting water use efficiency through implementation of Water Conservation and Demand Management activities ( e.g. reporting and fixing water leaks) as well as hygiene awareness promotion
- Practice good hygiene for a healthy lifestyle
- Choose careers in water resource management and sanitation

- Establish partnerships Nationally and Internationally striving to deliver integrated environmental education in schools
- Ensure that our environmental assets and natural resources are well protected, and are continually enhanced
- Through this programme learners educate their communities and parents. “Educate a child to educate a nation” It is against this background that we deem it fit and necessary to invest in our youth.

Our focus now is going to be ensuring that schools participating in this programme implement the proposed solutions and become model schools in water resource management and environment.

This year we have invited young people and Ministers from Africa to participate at the Youth Summit, to consolidate ideas and share knowledge for sustainable water resources in Africa. I have a vision of having a SADC youth summit, where we will engage and take the idea forward.

In closing Programme Director allow me to express my sincere gratitude to our generous partners. I must say that we are extremely humbled by the amount of support which was provided by our partners in the successful implementation of this event, without their continued support we would not be able to host this Youth Water Summit on yearly basis. It is therefore prudent to share with you how our partners contributed towards the success of this Youth Water Summit.

- MTN for sponsoring media centre for our needy schools
- ABSA-for partnering with us to implement water related projects in the rural areas
- Rand Water Board-for the printing of Learner Support Materials and provision of transport for learners in the nearby schools to come to the exhibition
- Amatola Water Board- for assisting us in the procurement of promotional materials for our learners from schools in all the Provinces
- Sedibeng Water Board-for their assistance in the procurement of Promotional materials for our guests

- Water Research Commission-for sponsoring our Scientific Research and related Projects
- Department of Basic Education-for partnering with us in the implementation of our Curriculum Support materials for Grade R to Grade 12 learners in schools
- Department of Social Development for their support in providing Child Care Minders during our week long stay in the Summit.

May I also acknowledge the presence of various National, Provincial Departments as well as representatives from municipalities and from other sectors who came to celebrate this event with us.

Finally, I would like to extend a special vote of thanks to all of you for the efforts and good work done, and to the organizers of this event, the staff of the ministry, the department of Water affairs at Head office, all our regions as well as from our entities.

Let the water unite us. Invest in youth, invest in a sustainable future. Water is life.

I thank you!