



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH DELIVERED BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MS REJOICE MABUDAFHASI DURING THE ADOPT A RIVER DOOR TO DOOR CAMPAIGN IN EERSTE RIVER, STELLENBOSCH, WESTERN CAPE

21 MARCH 2011

Programme Director

Executive Mayor of the Cape Winelands District Municipality

Mayor of Stellenbosch municipality

Councilors

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed a great honour for me to be back here today in Stellenbosch in the Eerste River catchment and specifically in Kayamandi on the banks of the Plankenbrug River – a tributary of the Eerste River - to celebrate Water Week with you and to revisit this important **Adopt a River** project one year after it was launched.

Today we are also commemorating the Human Rights Day. This year's theme for the National Water Week is "**Water is a Human Right issue**". Hence it is enshrined in our

constitution that “Everyone has the right to have access to - sufficient food and water”, and subsequently everyone should have access to safe drinking water.

The Adopt-a-River project is aimed at creating awareness among South Africans of the need to care for our scarce water resources and to actively participate in the protection and management thereof. This Project is part of the River Health Programme which is a nation-wide monitoring system assessing the health of our rivers.

South Africa, like many other countries in Africa, is 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. Based on the fact that South Africa is a water scarce country the Department has a responsibility to ensure that there is enough water for socio- economic growth and development. If the Department do not manage and control pollution and waste water, we are likely not to meet our future human needs.

In all this efforts and challenges, we require intensified assistance from the public, hence our call to the public, to be engaged in campaigns such as Adopt a River with an effort of caring for our resources and to educate youth as future users how to also look after this natural resource in their areas.

We are also gathered here today to acknowledge the good work and give a testimony of the hard work our community members in Eerste River continue to instil in the caring of our natural resources despite the challenges they are faced with on daily basis.

A group of 50 unemployed local people (focusing on women and the youth) from the Stellenbosch Municipality’s database is currently being trained in basic river monitoring and rehabilitation initiatives in order to assist with such projects.

They consist of 5 teams of 10 people each and will be implementing cleaning, monitoring and rehabilitation type projects in the different stretches of the river.

Water is an important part of our economic growth and in creating a better life for our people. It is therefore vital that we together care, protect and conserve this finite resource. To ensure that all of our people are able to have access and to safely enjoy our natural resources, the department has developed a framework and implementation plan as guidelines on how this programme is to be rolled out.

In conclusion, I would like reiterate the Department of Water Affairs, Stellenbosch municipality, Cape Winelands District Municipality, City of Cape Town and the Stellenbosch community's recommitment to Adopt the Eerste River and all its tributaries.

Later on, all stakeholders will embark on a door to door campaign to raise awareness about the conservation and protection of our scarce water resources.

I thank you!